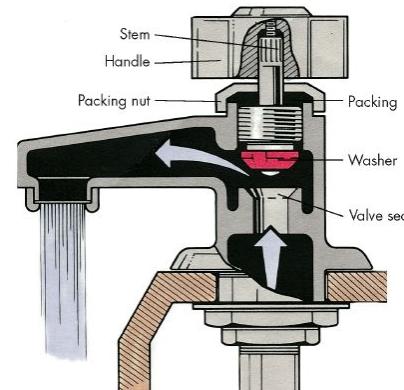


## Faucets and Plumbers

My neighbor Fred Petito of Ivy Hill Rd. suggested a few ideas for me to write about for the Legend. They were repairing a dripping faucet, clearing a stuck drain and why plumbers charge so much. Sounds easy right? Wrong! When I began to research faucets I was in for quite a task. In the old days just about every faucet from the hose cock on the side of your house to your bathtub was more or less the same. They had a handle with a easy to locate screw. Then there was a packing nut and when you removed that you could turn out the stem and on the bottom of that was a washer.

The washer was easy to change and if you were handy you could change out the seat also if need be. Typical cross section of a washer type valve is depicted on the right.

Except for the hose bib it is hard to find that type now.



In our homes there are cartridge type, washerless type and ball type. There are single handle, one piece, two & three piece valves and diverter valves for the tub & shower. And although most are Kohler products there are so many different models that it would be difficult to give specific instructions. Kohler does have a site on the web at <http://www.serviceparts.kohler.com/> that gives a fairly good description and parts list for all their valves. Kohler Co. offers a Lifetime Limited Warranty that guarantees its faucets to be leak and drip-free during normal residential use for as long as the original purchaser owns his/her home. Go to

<http://www.us.kohler.com/general/warranty.jsp#faucets>

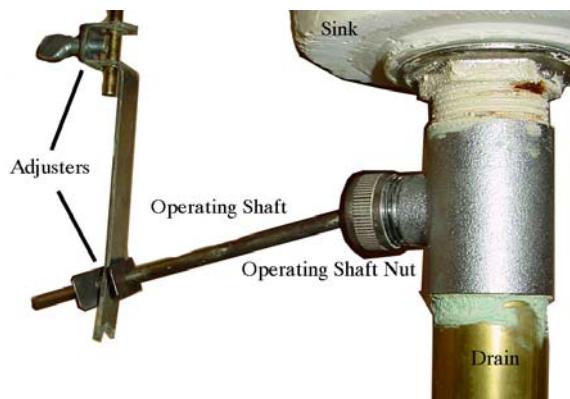
All other aspects of the faucet are also warranted to be free of defects in material and workmanship. That's parts only, *not* service. But the site does give a parts schematic for most valves so you can figure out how to disassemble them and replace the cartridges. Most of the

drain problems in our homes are with the toilets and bathroom sinks. The toilets are connected to 3" plastic pipes. The plastic is great because nothing sticks to the inside of it and there are usually no leaks at the joints which mean no tree roots invading the pipe. That said, the toilets built to fit the 3" pipes have smaller openings at the bottom than the ones we were used to that

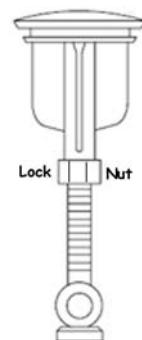


sat over 4" pipe (and you thought it was you). If your toilet stops up, it usually just needs a vigorous plunging. Use the type of plunger that has the fold out extension on the bottom. This type fits nicely in the toilet opening resulting in a tight fit. That would be the one on the left in the picture. Hold the plunger in the toilet bowl at as much of an angle as you can to let the air out and the water in. You want water in the plunger as opposed to air because water does not compress and air does. Stroke the plunger up and down vigorously about 5 or 6 times and pull up quickly. Could get a little messy here,

but it should work. If not, repeat until it does. The bathroom sinks usually clog or drain slowly for two reasons. The first is that the sink stopper becomes loose on the threads of its shaft when the locknut backs off. The stopper keeps getting lower and lower until the water takes a long time to go down. The quick fix is to turn it counter



clockwise to raise it back up. The correct fix is to set the height, remove the stopper by undoing the operating shaft nut, pulling out the operating shaft, tightening the locknut and reinstalling the stopper and operating shaft. This would also take care of the second



problem which is hair getting caught on the stopper and operating shaft. Clean all parts while they are out, put the operating shaft back in temporarily and pour a pot of hot water down the

drain. Remove the operating shaft and assemble all the cleaned parts back as original. I personally do not think anyone should use chemicals to unstop a drain. The clog is usually near the drain, not in the pipe so if it is so bad that a good plunging will not clear it, then a hose or snake down the drain should do it. Chemicals are very dangerous, especially if they don't clear the blockage and someone has to disassemble the piping. I'll cover plumber's charges next month.

As always check this and other tips at - <http://www.aaazzz.net/id5.html>

Bob Mattsson