

Appliance Repair Show Transcript—June 10, 2007

RepairClinic.com Call Center: 1-888-34-FIXIT (1-888-343-4948)

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Topics Discussed:

- [1992 Jenn Air Side By Side Refrigerator, Model JRSD246, Not Dumping Ice Cubes](#)
- [1992 Panasonic Microwave Has Gotten Damp and the Touchpad No Longer Works](#)
- [Hotpoint Dryer No Longer Dries after Venting was Cleaned](#)
- [GE Side by Side Refrigerator/Freezer with Air Leaking From the Door Gasket](#)
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WJR ANNOUNCER

Time now for the Appliance Repair Show with John McCulloch and John Sowden. This is the Appliance Repair show with John Sowden, brought to you by [RepairClinic.com](#). Now here's John McCulloch.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Good Sunday morning everyone and welcome to the Appliance Repair Show here on News Talk 760 WJR where our number as usual is 800-859-0957 and from [RepairClinic.com](#), as a matter of fact the Vice President of RepairClinic.com, John Sowden is here to provide all the appliance repair advice you really call for. John, good morning.

JOHN SOWDEN

We're going to the phone lines here, if you have an appliance related question please call in. The more information you can give us about the appliance you have a question on, the more specific we can be in providing an answer. I am prepared to answer any general questions also, so please call in and we'll see if we can help you out.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Why don't we take one second before we go to the phones and explain [RepairClinic.com](#) and what it is that you folks do?

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, RepairClinic.com sells appliance parts for all major appliances over the Internet. We also have a [walk-in counter](#). Our address is 48600 Michigan Avenue in Canton,

Michigan and the nearest major cross street is Beck Road. We also have a [phone center](#) to help find your parts, that's open 8am-Midnight, Eastern Time, 7 days a week. You can also call in if you can't find what you need on the website. [RepairClinic.com](#) provides a lot of how-to advice on how to repair your appliances, general information about appliances, places to find out what the parts are called and where they're located. We're a company that is interested in helping people obviously we sell parts but we're also really interested in saving people money by giving them the [tools](#) to fix their own appliances.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

That's the impression I got when I came into the place. Sometimes I think John Sowden has a way of downplaying himself because they're kind of used to this operation. Folks this is a huge operation, I mean, it is HUGE! How many square feet, 75,000? That's floor-to-ceiling with appliance parts! And if they make an appliance here in America, and they sell it here in America, you've pretty much got it there; most of the parts are in stock.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, we do handle at this point over 80 brands and we stock most of the common parts for most of your appliances out there. [RepairClinic.com](#) also provides value and items for those of you who don't have a broken appliance right now. By visiting our [website](#) you can not only learn about appliances, but, if you've got a [knob](#) that's broken on your [dryer](#) and you've been using a pair of pliers to turn it on for the past year, you can just simply log in and get a new knob for it and have it shipped to your door. We try to make it easy for you. We ship Federal Express, so you can choose which [shipping options](#) you want; overnight if you need it in a hurry or standard if it's not a big deal. But either way you don't have to have the laundry stacked up in your laundry room for us to be of value to you. There are lots of other things we can help you with.

1992 Jenn Air Side By Side Refrigerator, Model JRSD246, Not Dumping Ice Cubes

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Great, well we'll get into more of that as the program goes on. Call in at 800-859-0957, that's 800-859-0957 and here with a question on a refrigerator, Bill, in Lenawee County here on the Appliance Repair Show News Talk 760 WJR. Morning, Bill!

BILL

Good morning! I found the [model number](#) after I talked to your screener. It's [JRSD246](#).

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay...

BILL

And my problem is, my refrigerator is a [side-by-side](#), and my icemaker [will not kick out the ice cubes](#).

JOHN SOWDEN

So you have a [dispenser bin](#) on the [door](#) in this [refrigerator](#), with ice and water in the door?

BILL

Yes it is.

JOHN SOWDEN

And it's not filling up the bin to dispense the ice cubes or you're [not getting ice](#) from the [icemaker](#) to the bin?

BILL

Yeah, from the icemaker to the bin, it has plenty of water and all that in there.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, the first thing you need to do with any icemaker problem is check the [refrigerator's](#) freezer temperature; it needs to be zero to eight degrees. Also the [icemaker](#) will not cycle until you have a temperature for the mold set around fifteen degrees? Have you tried to do any diagnostic on this or have you just noticed that it's broken?

BILL

We've been playing with it, the [freezer](#) has plenty of airflow in there, and we've got the temperature set clear to the bottom of the dial. What I've done, I tried something, I took a hair dryer, stuck it in there, and just warmed up the ice cubes a little bit and the ice maker kicked the ice cubes out.

JOHN SOWDEN

Hmmm... okay.

BILL

Now, if I understand right, isn't it true, when the ice cubes are ready to pop out, don't they get a little electric charge something around there just to break them loose?

JOHN SOWDEN

Well generally how this works is when the [icemaker](#) mold hits around between 12 and 15 degrees depending on the unit, it turns on a small heater underneath the icemaker and helps release the ice. Then there's a [motor](#) that turns a set of what looks like little rakes, which circles around and digs out the ice cubes from the mold. There are several ways that you can test this. [RepairClinic.com](#) actually has a good explanation of how ice makers work on our website. If you go to the "[Contact Us](#)" section we actually have a document in our "[Repair Help](#)" section that will walk you through this and it will tell you what things to test in the ice maker. If you take the cover off you'll see there are four or five letters with holes in the face of the [icemaker](#), and there are different test points on there so you can test it. You can also, make it manually harvest the ice; where you can jump the circuit and make it dump, so you can see if it's not filling or where about in the cycle that the icemaker head is failing.

BILL

Oh, all right. So is your [website](#) on WJR?

JOHN SOWDEN

No, it's [RepairClinic.com](#)

BILL

Okay, we'll go to [RepairClinic.com](#) then.

JOHN SOWDEN

And the [icemaker](#) head that you have on this one, there are no parts to this particular icemaker head; it's replaced as one unit. So if the icemaker's failed —

BILL

Could an inline fuse have something to do with this?

JOHN SOWDEN

There is an inline fuse in the [icemaker wiring harness](#), it's mounted to the side of the icemaker, and what happens is if the icemaker should fail and the mold heater should run away it will take power away.

BILL

That's what I was wondering.

JOHN SOWDEN

You said that by heating it up you got it to cycle so that tells me that the [motor](#) was probably turning which means the fuse has to be okay.

BILL

Yeah, as soon as I warmed the ice cubes it broke them loose and popped them out.

JOHN SOWDEN

It's kind of unusual, those heaters don't normally go bad, and if you need a new heater it comes as a new [mold assembly](#). A lot of times you'll find that depending on the age of the unit, and yours is about 15 years old, so you might just want to get a new [icemaker](#) assembly.

BILL

Okay, thank you very much sir.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Thanks very much for the call! That's how it works at News Talk 760 on the Appliance Repair Show. The more information you give us, of course, the quicker John can get to the problem. Call 800-859-0957, that's 800-859-0957, this is the Appliance Repair Show with John Sowden here on News Talk 760 WJR. We'll be right back.

1992 Panasonic Microwave Has Gotten Damp and the Touchpad No Longer Works

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Steve, in Royal Oak, has a [microwave](#) question on News Talk 760 WJR. Welcome, Steve.

STEVE

Glad you got this on, you appliance repair folks can decide whether we should chuck it or fix it. I guess that's my question, I got an old girl here, she's fifteen years old, real big old fashioned [microwave](#). What happened is it was put out in the garage for a while, and apparently not being used and whatever, seems the moisture must have gotten into it. Brought it back in the house, and it [didn't really want to work](#). I put it back out in the garage and when it got damp again because it was in a separate garage, it worked again. I was told it has a [touch pad](#) control assembly on the front, it's from JC Penny, I believe made by Panasonic.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, this [microwave](#), it's not an over the counter I take it, it's a table-top, one of the big boxes?

STEVE

Yeah, it's an old beast; I mean this thing's so big you could probably put two turkeys in it if you wanted to. And it's worked well, and I even borrowed a [meter](#) to check and see if there was any radiation coming through around the corners and it still was good. But my question to you is it worth getting the [touch pad](#) for it or replacing it because it's probably 15 years old or whatever and it worked and then it didn't and then it works again and it has to be something with that control unit.

JOHN SOWDEN

When you say it works, when you give it a command, time, bake or whatever you put in the minutes, you do not get the [microwave](#) to take that command, is that what you're complaint is?

STEVE

Right, and here's the point, it got damp, I don't mean wet, but I mean out in the garage it's damp, right, and this thing worked, and then it dried out, it's like it was in the house and it worked, went outside, brought it back in and it didn't work, take it back outside and it was working again, brought it back in the house and it didn't work. Right now [it will not work](#).

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, it's not unusual for electronics to have intermittent problems. If it's in the touch pad; the [touch pad](#) actually has a ribbon that plugs into the main [control board](#). A lot of times you can unplug that ribbon and this is kind of a "if this doesn't work you're out of luck" fix, but you can take a pencil eraser and gently, two or three strokes, go and clean up the end of that membrane switch, that ribbon connector, and then put it back into the

socket on the [board](#). If it's a moisture problem, that might help out. The problem you're going to run into is the age of the unit you have, and the brand, that even if you wanted to repair it, and I don't know for sure without information, but you probably won't be able to get [parts](#) for it anyway.

STEVE

Right, yeah that's what I was told. I'm from the old school, somewhere in between a fossil and you guys, but the point is, why is stuff now made so not repairable? Is that just the plan, planned obsolescence or what?

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, things are basically a lot less expensive to buy these days, they're mass produced I think almost every home has a [microwave](#), some have two. People have them upstairs in their bedrooms now, and they have them in a spare room for a guest, as well as a lot of hotels. When this microwave was new, it was 200 dollars or more and now you can get them for 30 dollars or less and it just becomes a point, that to purchase the parts, even if you do it yourself, on some units, it just doesn't make sense - it's not cost effective anymore.

STEVE

It just seems that things don't last as long as they used to. That might be a question you can ask other folks. Okay, great.

Hotpoint Dryer No Longer Dries after Venting was Cleaned

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And, here with a question about a [Hotpoint dryer](#) is Nancy, in Saint Clair; you're on the [RepairClinic.com](#) Appliance Repair Show.

NANCY

I've got a problem with my [dryer](#). I used it the other day and it dried a load fine, I put the next load in and it [wouldn't heat](#). I've disconnected it from the vent and cleaned all that out and it still won't heat.

JOHN SOWDEN

Was the [vent](#) pretty dirty when you did that?

NANCY

Yeah.

JOHN SOWDEN

And how long is the venting going outside? Venting problems are a leading cause for [dryers](#) having to work too hard or to prematurely fail or to run into a no heat condition.

NANCY

Right, my dryer [vent](#) is way too long. It goes out a big I'd say a four maybe a five-inch wide PVC pipe. I'd say at least twelve feet. It's right in the center of the house, its 12 feet one way and 12 feet the other and there's no way you can go straight up.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well ideally when it comes to [dryer](#) venting the kind of general venting requirements are most dryers allow fifty feet of venting. Then, for every elbow you have, subtract 8 feet, and for the [outside vent cover](#) subtract 8 feet, and again these are general guidelines, so if you have a few elbows coming out, one off the back of the unit —

NANCY

It's just one elbow.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. You're pretty close to the maximum operating requirements...the first thing you need to do is make sure that being an [electric dryer](#) that you have the proper voltage to the [dryer](#) and that means check the circuit breakers and make sure they're all right.

NANCY

It is. I've already had an electrician look at it, to make sure my dryer and my stove is 220.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay, the problem we run into with [electric dryers](#) is that a lot of times the unit will tumble and it still [will not heat](#) because you do need 220 or two separate legs of 110 volts coming into it to make it run. So one side of that could be blown at the fuse box or even in the dryer itself, you could have a burned wire or something, but it will still tumble. So we tell people check your power and they say well, it's turning so it must be okay, but that's generally not the case.

NANCY

Right.

JOHN SOWDEN

Basically as far as the [dryer](#) itself, it's possible that the heating element has failed. And on most of these units they have a [thermal fuse](#) on the dryer that can cause the element to cut out, and normally that's a one-time fuse. The fuse is located internally on a dryer, mounted to the [heating element](#). If you have proper power to it, the three most common components that could cause a no-heat are, the element, the [thermostat](#) that regulates the heat, and there's also one on the [motor](#) itself, a switch that senses that the motor's running before it'll allow the heater to come on, and that switch can fail as well. So you kind of need to get in there and do some diagnosing with a [test meter](#) and see where you're losing the circuit for that. In the control panel for this unit there's normally a tech sheet or a guide.

NANCY

Do you mean on that thing that you can't read?

JOHN SOWDEN

On those squiggly lines, yes, that's the wiring diagram for it. If you look at it, it will show you the components and paths the electricity takes so you can see all the elements and all the components that are in line with that circuit and check each one and see if it's failed. You could always send us an [email](#) if you have specific questions and you can also get some help disassembling it on the [website](#) as well.

NANCY

All right, so if we narrow it down, say it is the [thermal fuse](#), where could I get the fuse or heating element for it?

JOHN SOWDEN

Well you could log into our website, [Repairclinic.com](#) and just go under the find parts section of it, put the [model number](#) in and you will see a picture of all the common elements for your unit.

NANCY

Woohoo! I like pictures, it makes it easy!

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Question, you said something and I wasn't quite sure I heard it right; did you say fifty or fifteen feet of [venting](#)?

JOHN SOWDEN

Five – zero, fifty.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And then eight feet off for every elbow. She had two [elbows](#) and a plate, so she had to take twenty-four feet off that or whatever.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, that's generally for what they call solid wall venting, or like steel tube venting. The flexible stuff is actually worse; you don't get as much distance out of that. So we're talking really about rigid venting requirements.

GE Side by Side Refrigerator/Freezer with Air Leaking From the Door Gasket

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Okay, let's go to a question about a [refrigerator seal](#) from Richard, in Canton, on News Talk 760 WJR. Hi Richard!

RICHARD

Hello! I have a [GE refrigerator](#), a [side-by-side](#) double door; the freezer door is on the left. It's the freezer door seal, which is leaking slightly. It's a small function of that

compartment of the total freezer section, however [it is leaking](#) and in checking into it I've found that the part through Servall would run about ninety-five dollars and it would be about a seventy dollar installation, so about one hundred and seventy dollars to replace the [seal](#) or to have it replaced. My question, is there any sealant that might be used to preclude the air from escaping from a slightly defective seal?

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, you say the seal is leaking, is it torn, or is it just a gap between the [door](#) and the frame? What are you observing in terms of the condition of the [gasket](#)?

RICHARD

It's not torn; it is the gap between the seal and the door.

JOHN SOWDEN

And is this on the [hinge](#) side or on the frame side where it closes in the center?

RICHARD

In the center.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay, well sometimes you can adjust the [doors](#) a little bit, is it normally one corner, top or bottom, or is it in the middle, where's this gap?

RICHARD

It's toward the bottom. It would be like the bottom quarter of the door.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay, well you can adjust the door sometimes; you can loosen the screws around the perimeter and slightly warp the door so that a portion of the door will sit closer to the frame. And the other thing that generally works well with [gaskets](#) is you could take a hairdryer and close the door and gently go over that area just back and forth, don't overheat the gasket, but there's a magnetic strip that runs around the perimeter of that door seal, and after a period of time sometimes the plastic in there can become a little brittle, and by using a hairdryer in that area and gently going back and forth you'll actually kind of make it a little more elastic in the plastic of the door seal and that magnet will pull it right back into the frame.

RICHARD

Ah ha, I appreciate that! That's worth a try before going the worst-case condition, having it replaced. I will give that a try.

Whirlpool Top Loading Washing Machine Shaking Violently

JOHN MCCULLOCH

We're going to talk with Brian, in Ortonville, about a [washer](#) that seems to be off level. Brian, good morning and welcome to the show.

BRIAN

My question is, I've got a [Whirlpool Whisper Quiet washer](#), and when it's in the normal operating mode, when it goes to the spin cycle, it feels like the tub is [off balance](#), you know how you get a load of laundry that's in there that's a little bit to one side?

JOHN SOWDEN

Uh-huh

BRIAN

Well even when you do that and you get the load balanced it still feels like it's going to shake itself loose, it starts to walk across the floor. It's much better when you put it in the delicate cycle where it doesn't spin quite as fast.

JOHN SOWDEN

Is this a top loading [washer](#)?

BRIAN

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

And when it's in the spin cycle, you say, it walks across the room?

BRIAN

Right.

JOHN SOWDEN

Is this a first floor laundry application?

BRIAN

Second floor.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay, so it's not in your basement?

BRIAN

No, it's not in the basement, it's in the upper level

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay, first of all ideally [washers](#) need a really solid floor to make it so that they're stable. The other thing you can try is when you level the unit, the [leveling legs](#) for those, the farther up inside the [washing machine](#) they are the better off you are. A lot of times when people try to level the washing machine they start unscrewing the legs and they keep raising the center of gravity up from the floor by dropping the legs down and they finally get it level, but the machine's two or three inches up off the floor now, so the first thing you do is try to get it so that the [leveling legs](#) are as far up inside the cabinet as you can

and still make the unit level. From there, if it's still going out of balance, that lower substructure on that machine generally rides on these three little [plastic pads](#) that can be worn. You can change those, they're not very expensive and they kind of snap into place once you get the cabinet off. Those being worn can cause it to rock quite a bit as well.

BRIAN

Is there a place where you can get an owner's manual for that?

JOHN SOWDEN

This is a Whirlpool?

BRIAN

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

You can try [Whirlpool](#) direct, and a lot of times if they have one still in print they'll send you one. Or you can purchase one, lot of stuff today they're putting online, so the printable version of [manuals](#) are not as available, as what they used to be. And normally once they run out of them they don't reprint them, especially for older machines.

BRIAN

I was just kind of curious if I try to take this thing apart is it relatively easy to find those cushions you described on the bottom?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes, you can actually log in to our [website](#) and in the "[Repair Help](#)" section and we can show you a general breakdown of the unit, where the components are for it. And then, also, if you go to the "[Contact Us](#)" section of the website, you can ask specific questions as well as see step by step on how to access this unit and get the cabinet off and all the things to look for to put it back together, so you can probably find most of what you need there, on our [website](#).

BRIAN

All right, great, thanks for the help!

1997 Washing Machine is leaking Oil

JOHN MCCULLOCH

We'll go to a dripping [washer](#) problem from Jim, in Northville, on the Appliance Repair Show on News Talk 760 WJR.

JIM

I have a [washing machine](#) that's dripping what looks like [transmission](#) fluid. It's been doing this for quite a while now, and the washer continues to work and doesn't seem to make a different noise or anything, so I don't know how long it's going to last.

JOHN SOWDEN

That's a good question! Now, underneath the machine you have a puddle of oil, is that what you're looking at?

JIM

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

And you say it's been doing it for quite some time?

JIM

Yes, we're constantly wiping up the oil

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay, so it's quite a bit of oil, then?

JIM

Yes

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay, well it sounds like it is transmission fluid and there's normally a lower [seal](#) in there that can fail and as far as how long it will last, probably until the [gear case](#) empties and then it seizes up, that's how long it goes.

JIM

That's kind of what I was figuring.

JOHN SOWDEN

It depends on the machine, whether you like it or not, how much money you want to put into it, but usually a [transmission](#) job is a few hundred dollars to have it replaced. So, a lot of people just run the [washing machine](#) until they quit. As for a time frame, I've seen people keep machines with leaking transmission fluid for a year or two, depending obviously on how big your family, as long as they still want to clean up transmission fluid every now and then and want to live with that they can run it for a while. But eventually it slings oil all over and it's messy so it's something at some point you'll have to probably deal with.

JIM

I see, but it's not just a simple seal that you can replace?

JOHN SOWDEN

You can tear apart the [transmission](#) on some of them and replace the [seals](#), but at that point your still tearing out the trans in order to do it on most applications and if it's been running without fluid in it, then you have other components inside that may be compromised, so if you're going to do it I would replace the transmission completely.

JIM

Oh, I see. Okay, okay, is that something a person could do? Not too much knowledge in [washing machines](#)?

JOHN SOWDEN

That's generally not an entry-level do-it-yourselfer type job, and some of them do require special [tools](#) in order to take the tub out and stuff like that. I've seen people be pretty crafty at fabricating things to do that, but overall it's something that you might want to have somebody do if you decide to repair it. But you said its ten years old?

JIM

It's probably that or more, yeah.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, you might want to look at what a new machine runs and roughly what it costs for the old one to repair it and make your decision based on that.

JIM

We have another one that's [dripping water](#) from the center of the unit. Is that a simple seal also?

JOHN SOWDEN

It's dripping water from the ...

JIM

Like the center of the tub.

JOHN SOWDEN

Is it the same type of machine?

JIM

Yes, same identical machine.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes, that's generally a [tub seal](#), and again that can sometimes be a pretty labor-intensive job that can cause it to do that.

JIM

Wow, okay, that's what I was kind of thinking.

JOHN SOWDEN

That's double bad news for you. Sorry about that!

JIM

Well, it looks like I'm going to get new ones.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Thanks for the call, Jim. Well, there are repairs that it makes sense to do because I've seen your people helping people with this on the [website](#), and there are repairs that are easy enough to do that you should do them!

JOHN SOWDEN

It all depends on the comfort level of the person. Some people are mechanics or they wrench on things a lot, so they're a lot more comfortable tearing something apart. A lot of the appliance repair stuff is pretty low-level, entry-level stuff, where a [screwdriver](#) or a pair of [pliers](#) will get a lot of the basic things taken care of and if people get into it themselves they find themselves a little more empowered. If people repair something themselves and next thing we know a month later we get an email that says, you know I fixed my dryer, my [washer's](#) making noise and now I want to tear it apart to see what's wrong with it.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

So you turn them into appliance repair aficionados?

JOHN SOWDEN

We try.

GE Top Mount Refrigerator Leaking Water into the Bottom of the Refrigerator

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Here's Becky, in Troy, with a [leaking fridge](#) on the Appliance Repair Show on News Talk 760 on WJR. Hi Becky!

BECKY

Hi, good morning! I have a [General Electric refrigerator](#) and it's a two door. I do have a [model number](#) if that helps.

JOHN SOWDEN

Is this a side by side or freezer on top?

BECKY

[Freezer on top](#). And what's happening is it is leaking underneath the freezer into the refrigerator compartment, and we get I'd say a cereal bowl of water that freezes once a week.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. Well, in your machine it goes into frost three or four times a day, and what happens when it goes into frost, the ice and frost on the cooling coil is melted by a [heater](#) and then the water goes into a [drain trough](#) and it's supposed to travel through a [tube](#) to the underside of your [refrigerator](#) and normally from what your telling me this tube is probably restricted, sometimes they're misaligned meaning the drain tube is where it sits underneath the trough is kind of ajar and you're leaking water around it. In order to do

this, you probably will have to remove the freezer floor to get in there and have a look at what's happening. It could be a physical restriction, sometimes as I said a frozen pea could get in there and plug that up, but a lot of times, over time the [tube](#) will become plugged and ice over, and the water has no where to go and starts dripping from the [refrigerator](#) ceiling.

BECKY

So how expensive is that to do - to remove the freezer floor?

JOHN SOWDEN

On most of these units, you have to take the [doors](#) off, there's what they call a breaker strip between your refrigerator and freezer section, you have to take that off, and then slide out basically that insulation package between your [refrigerator](#) and freezer section. It's something that you might want at least a second pair of hands to help you with and generally I'd recommend calling somebody to get a look at something like this.

BECKY

All right, that's what I'll do then.

Microwave Making Loud Noises and a Red Glow Coming From the Back

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Jim, in Sandusky, wants to talk about a glow coming out of his [microwave](#) on the Appliance Repair Show. Morning Jim!

JIM

I put something in the [microwave](#) about a week ago and pushed the button to start it and there was a bunch of noise. Sounded like barking and then there was a [red glow](#) that come on the wall behind the microwave where there's some grillwork, and I pushed the button, opened the [door](#), turned it off, and I'm sitting here in the garage looking at the thing right now, I'm thinking it had a bunch of dust and I took the lid off, but it's not dust, so I have no idea what it might be.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well you said it glows, so let's start with all the arcing. Generally the arcing is caused by something in the [microwave](#) that shouldn't be there, like metal, and or if you have any food buildup or spills or something that are in the microwave, if they get on the [wave guide cover](#), that's the small portion that the microwaves come through into the cavity, it will start to cook those before it cooks the food, so that becomes the loud noise, and you'll see a lot of [sparking](#) and things of that nature.

JIM

Well, what I had was a plastic cup with water in it for coffee, instant coffee, and the glowing was coming through this grillwork that's in the back right-hand side of where the [fan](#) and all that is, in the microwave.

JOHN SOWDEN

Hmm, is it working otherwise? It cooked and everything?

JIM

Well I don't know. I turned it off when all that started, and I'm half afraid even to plug it in out here in the garage, because I have no idea what this thing might do at this point.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, if you have the cover off of it I would not recommend doing that. Microwaves actually can store voltage in them even when unplugged. They have a high-voltage [capacitor](#) that even with the unit unplugged if you do not discharge it before you start working on it, it can give you a free hairdo or a nasty shock. It can hurt if not worse, so, from what you're describing, if there was not something in the [wave-guide cover](#) or the stir cover that was burning that was causing the arcing, then I would recommend it might be in the [magnetron tube](#) itself, which again is something that would be expensive to repair.

JIM

Yeah, well that was the other thing because I didn't smell anything, that electronic smell if you've got wires burning or something like that. I didn't smell any of that, and now that I get the cover off I don't see any burned wires or anything either, so that kind of puzzled me. I thought really at first it was dust in the thing and the fan that is right there toward the back where that [grill](#) is and I thought maybe that's what was glowing.

JOHN SOWDEN

Obviously, I'd have to see the machine at this point to be a lot more help, but the only other thing I can think of is if the [magnetron tube](#) itself is overheating. You could possibly get that condition and if that's the case, I don't know how expensive of a [microwave](#) this is, but a lot of these come to the point where they're not worth repairing.

JIM

This is a Cofton, and I went to your [website](#) and I didn't even see it as a brand name you service.

JOHN SOWDEN

It's not, I don't recognize the brand, but there's a lot of stuff that's sold through chains stores and stuff like that under brands that we are either working on getting [parts](#) for, or there's not a lot of it out there, it could be private label stuff, so could be made by somebody else with that name on it.

1990 Caloric Gas Range with Two Surface Burners Lighting

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Here's a question on a [Caloric range](#) that's got a problem from Harold, in Madison Heights, on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead, Harold.

HAROLD

Yes, we have a Caloric [range](#), we bought it '90-'91, and ...

JOHN SOWDEN

Gas range?

HAROLD

You're right. And the burners on one side work fine when you turn them on using the [igniter](#), and the other side, you have to use a match to light them.

JOHN SOWDEN

So when you turn on the, was it the [left side that doesn't work](#)?

HAROLD

It happens to be the left side, yeah.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay, and when you turn on the left side [knob](#), do you hear the "click, click, click" like you do?

HAROLD

Yeah, you hear the igniter trying to work.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, it depends on how this system is wired but it could be in the [spark switch](#), which means that right behind the [knob](#) on the shaft of the [gas valve](#) there's a small switch that when you turn on the knob you're actually turning a switch that sends power to the spark module. That could have failed. The spark modules on most of these type units have two outputs, one of them is left side and one of them is right side. Or, you can wire front to back, however you want to do it, but that's generally how they come, so it's possible that the left side has failed and the right side's still working. And one way to check that is on the spark module itself they have the outgoing leads to the one side or the other and you can just reverse them. So now if you turn on the left side and it works and the right side doesn't then you know that it's the problem, it's the output on the module itself. And they're generally thirty dollars or so for the module. Some of these older [Caloric's](#), they hide them in the side panel or along the back panel, so you might have a hard time finding the extra component to get at it, or it may be underneath the [main top](#), they used to tuck them way out the way.

HAROLD

It'd probably be right under the top there that you can easily lift off.

JOHN SOWDEN

It could be under there, sometimes they're mounted on the back, and some they actually had them in the side panel. It's not a very hard job to do, but you do have to remove it,

not very many, but if you get to a point where you can't find it that would probably be where it's hiding.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Could he go to the [website](#) with the year and the [model number](#) of the [Caloric](#)?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, if you give us the information off it, and have questions we can tell you what you're looking at, we can also send you a link to the [components](#) that you might need to repair it, so basically you'll get an [email](#) from us saying click here to view your answer and you'll have hopefully all the information you need.

HAROLD

In other words, the repair should be right up there in the top of it. So that shouldn't be hard for me to do.

JOHN SOWDEN

Now that's a hard question to answer but this is something that a lot of people perform this type of repair, it's kind of an average do-it-yourself type job, so as long as you unplug the unit and mark where the wires go and stuff like that, it's hard to get into a lot of trouble.