

Appliance Repair Show Transcript—December 16, 2007

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Kenmore Side by Side Refrigerator/Freezer located in the Garage and the Freezer doesn't stay cold enough during the winter

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Let's start things off with, Mary Francis in Walled Lake, with a [Kenmore freezer](#) question, on the Appliance Repair Show. Good morning, Mary Francis.

MARY FRANCIS

Hi, thank you. I have a question about our [side-by-side refrigerator](#). We keep it in our garage, so it's very cold right now, being winter; the freezer part won't stay cold enough. I'm assuming because it says that the [thermostat](#) adjusts both the refrigerator and the freezer temperatures. So I'm just wondering if there's anything we can do to get that to work in the winter. We're thinking about bringing it down into the basement but it's big and we don't want to have to do that.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, they generally do not work well in the garage. Freezers do better than refrigerator freezers. A lot of times what happens is the actual outside temperature is colder than it is inside, and [it doesn't cycle](#) the refrigerator on properly.

MARY FRANCIS

So there is really nothing you can do except buy a separate freezer?

JOHN SOWDEN

On some units they have what they call a [garage kit](#) available. Some incorporate heaters on some of the older units. It actually turns the inside light on inside the refrigerator to generate heat and then cycle on the [thermostat](#). I doubt this unit has something like that. You might try the manufacturer and see. Otherwise, yeah, it's one of those things where they're really not designed to work in temperatures really below sixty degrees for the average fridge. So anytime you get much lower than that you start getting erratic temperatures.

MARY FRANCIS

Ok. All right, well thanks so much!

Refrigerator Located in the Garage and the Freezer Doesn't Get Cold Enough

JOHN MCCULLOCH

We go now to Chuck in Roseville, on News Talk 760 WJR. Good morning, Chuck.

CHUCK

Yes, I think that the young lady that you just talked to answered part of my question. I have a refrigerator in my garage. It's an older refrigerator; I bought it second-hand. I went out there last week to check the [freezer](#) and I noticed the meat was getting soft and it's still plugged in. I'm just wondering am I better off just unplugging that refrigerator, or why is the freezer [not keeping things cold enough](#). Is it the weather, because it's so cold out in the garage to begin with?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes, I'm not saying you don't have a problem with a machine, but you do get a lot of erratic temperatures when you have a unit out in the garage, especially when it gets as cold as it has been. The other thing is having a load in the freezer, having it mostly full helps, as far as in any inside or out situation to make it cycle properly. But basically, it's just that the outside temperatures fluctuate so much that at times it doesn't cycle on the [refrigerator](#) because of the outside ambient temperature, so it's...

CHUCK

So am I better off unplugging it or just leaving it like it is? Because I still use the refrigerator, I can keep milk in there because it's like putting it in the garage or any place that's outside is going to be cold enough.

JOHN SOWDEN

Free refrigeration! Basically, I don't recommend putting them in the garage. There are some machines that are designed to be put in the garage, but they're built and engineered for that. What happens is because it doesn't cycle on and off properly, at times you have long off times and that's probably what you're experiencing. What happens then is the oil inside the compressor gets really thick and it's just like in your car in the morning and it's really hard to start, and it can burn out your compressor and have other issues. So you can run them out in the garage and have no problems for years and years, but you might want to check the manufacturer's warranty; if people are looking to buy a new one to put in the garage because a lot of times it will state that the warranty is not covered for stuff that's outside.

CHUCK

I read that once. As a matter of fact, I was talking to an appliance salesman and he said if you put it in the garage it's not warranted.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right. It depends on the manufacturer.

CHUCK

I guess what I want to know, is it okay to leave it plugged in and not worry about it, because it seems as soon as the weather breaks in the spring she kicks back on?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah. That will definitely help out. You know if it's an old fridge and if it's something that conks out on you, if the compressor locks up, I wouldn't put any expensive steaks in there—

CHUCK

No, I took everything out of the [freezer](#). The only things I really store in there are a gallon of milk and maybe a couple loaves of bread, and that's in the refrigerator part. I took everything out of the freezer.

JOHN SOWDEN

You could put some milk jugs with water in them to help with the load and it might run a little more efficiently. But yeah, if you're just using it as an overflow type refrigerator, then keep it going.

CHUCK

Okay. Thank you very much.

2001 GE Spectra Oven (Turner Series) Preheat Light Does Not Go Off

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And here's Ursula, in Webberville, on the Appliance Repair Show. Good morning, Ursula.

URSULA

I listen to you all the time and today was the day to call you. I have a [GE Spectra Stove](#), the Turner series, and it's probably six years old or so.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok.

URSULA

I've had the same appliance guy come out twice. The [pre-heat oven light does not go off](#). It stays on all the time, so that makes my food, like my turnkey and everything cook quicker. He changed the computer twice; he said it was the computer. And I said to him, you know the preheat light should go off when the oven is up to temperature and then it goes on and it's supposed to go on and off. This stays on continually.

JOHN SOWDEN

You say the [control board](#) has been changed twice?

URSULA

Yes. And they sent the same appliance company out twice, and you know you don't think about it until you want to use the oven. And I thought today's the day, it's been changed twice. He said it's the computer and I called him today and he said there's nothing else I can do. And it's very annoying because I'm using extra electricity and things are cooking quicker.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, normally what happens in most units is once you reach the pre-set temperature if you set it at 350 degrees, the pre-heat light will then turn off and then switch over to the bake mode.

URSULA

Yeah, and then it switches on again when the temperature goes down.

JOHN SOWDEN

Exactly. In pre-heat, you normally incorporate the [bake and broil elements](#), or the upper and lower elements in the cavity, to get you up to temperature faster, and then after that you just cycle on and off in the bake mode and the lower element does most of the work after that.

URSULA

Yeah, I know that, and this is ridiculous!

JOHN SOWDEN

The thing is in these types of stoves, basically, if it's not reading the initial cycle, then I still think it sounds like it's coming from the computer. As long as the elements are

working... that's the brain, the thing that turns the thing on and off is the [main control board](#). So there's not much else in that system other than possibly the [sensor](#), but if you set it at 350 degrees are you getting 350? Is it [burning everything](#), or does the temperature seem to be regulating properly?

URSULA

I have an [oven thermometer](#) and I think in my book there's some way to adjust it because I don't know whether I left the oven thermometer in the oven while I was heating, but the [temperature is always running lower](#) than what its set for, probably like 75 degrees.

JOHN SOWDEN

Hmm.

URSULA

But he's replaced the computer twice, so I just kind of gave up calling him.

JOHN SOWDEN

When's the last time they replaced the [control board](#)?

URSULA

Well, it's probably six, eight months ago or more.

JOHN SOWDEN

And the problem continued immediately after that or did it work—

URSULA

No! It still continued after that, and the guy I had, he said well it's supposed to be, and I said it's not supposed to be on all the time! So you just kind of let something go and then every time I really want to cook something I get really annoyed, so I thought today's the day I'm going to call you. So you're saying it is. I should try to have somebody come out one more time and replace it?

JOHN SOWDEN

I would talk to the manufacturer.

URSULA

Yeah, well you know what, I have tried to get a hold of the manufacturer and you can never get through to them.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, they have consumer hotlines. Normally, they will try to take care of it. In your case, I think you're looking for 800-626-2000.

URSULA

Okay, because it seems like I called somebody before and they said well I don't know anything about it. So I will, I could try that number but you know it's very annoying.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right. Again, it could be something like they have changed the [control board](#) and the pre-heat light now just stays on. It could be they just made a software change basically; it could be just normal operation as long as it's not burning anything. But almost every unit I've seen, the pre-heat does cycle off.

URSULA

But you can hear it, that's the other thing. You can hear it clicking, like it should be clicking off, you know what I'm saying? But it still stays on.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right, you hear the clicking of the relays that fire the [bake and broil elements](#), sending power to the appropriate place. It sounds like it's almost normal operation except the light doesn't go off, and that's normally something internal on the board. Yeah, I would certainly pursue it and especially if you've changed two, I'd call the company that originally came out and see if they'll work with you. It might be something like there's a service flash on this particular unit where they can look and see if there's been any changes made. But otherwise, I'd say take it up with the manufacturer.

URSULA

Okay, I'll try this number. Thanks a lot.

1997 Jenn-Air Refrigerator/Freezer Not Cold Enough on the Freezer Side

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Let's go now to Tim, in Berkeley, on News Talk 760 WJR.

TIM

Thanks for taking my call. I've got a [Jenn-Air refrigerator freezer](#) upright, and my wife said last week all the ice cream was soft in it. Everything else seemed to be okay, but the [freezer wasn't keeping up to temperature](#). Any suggestions? Or, can you tell me if the fan vents need to be cleared or something?

JOHN SOWDEN

How old is this machine?

TIM

Oh, I think about ten years.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah. Is the freezer side [starting to lose temperature](#)? Is the refrigerator side having any issues?

TIM

Not that we know of.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay.

TIM

The only thing we noticed was that the ice cream was soft. It seemed like the meat was staying frozen but the ice cream wasn't.

JOHN SOWDEN

The first thing I would do is put an accurate [thermometer](#) in there and see what temperatures you have inside the freezer section.

TIM

Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

You're looking at from zero to eight degrees. If you opened the door and caught it right after a defrost cycle, and depending on where the ice cream is, it might have seemed a little mushy to you. Also, different ice creams will have different textures according to temperature inside just by their sugar content and other things. So ice cream is a hard thing to use as a measurement of how well your freezer is doing, although if it's down to zero then everything freezes pretty much rock hard. I'd start with [freezer temperature](#) and see what you have. If you're not keeping at least eight to ten degrees then I'd say you have a problem. The first thing to do is clean the condenser, which is the coil on the back or underside of the unit. If that's dirty it's going to run quite a bit and never really get down to the temperature desired. In this particular unit, they have a small condenser in the back; there's a [fan](#) that blows air through it and a lot of times they get plugged up internally and you have to blow it out. Either get a vacuum and vacuum the stuff out or use compressed air and blow out the internal portion of that condenser. That will make it run efficiently regardless of whether that's the problem or not. It will certainly help things. If it continues, then I would lean more towards a [defrost system](#) failure, and normally after a period of time you'll see a frost buildup on the back wall of the freezer system.

TIM

We haven't had that problem yet.

JOHN SOWDEN

At times just remove the back panel unless it's really bad to make a visual inspection of it. I'd try those two things for starters and see what happens.

TIM

Eight to ten degrees, right?

JOHN SOWDEN

Zero to eight is what the freezer section is normally required, but after a defrost cycle it will get up to twenty, twenty-two degrees and stay there for about fifteen minutes. That happens between three or four times a day, so if you caught it at that point, you may have just opened the door at the wrong time and seen the ice cream. If it's something that continues then I think you have a problem.

TIM

All right I'll try the [thermometer](#). I appreciate it.

Kitchen Aid Washing Machine Has a Film around the Top of the Drum

JOHN MCCULLOCH

With a question on a Kitchen Aid here's Darryl, in Troy, on the Appliance Repair Show. Good morning Darryl. Go ahead, please.

DARRYL

I've got a question on this [Kitchen Aid washer](#). It's putting a film or a greasy, waxy coating around the top of the drum. The wife quit using the fabric softener because she had been told that that could be something that was causing it, and she's using one of the Downy release balls or whatever you put in it. But this is putting a film that's waxy feeling type thing, about two or three inches wide around the top of the drum, and now it's even getting on the [agitator](#) sump she says.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, it could be a fabric softener buildup. Do you use a lot of cold water wash?

DARRYL

Boy that would be a good question for her. I would say yes, but I don't know that. Maybe I should get her on the other line.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, we can do conference calls! No, that's okay. Actually, there are three components related to what you have going on there. You have one of probably three conditions. One is it's a soap buildup. This is at the top of the tub, right?

DARRYL

Yes, the top of the tub.

JOHN SOWDEN

So, it's at the very upper level of the water. It's either the detergent is not dissolving properly, and that can be caused from improper detergent, too much detergent, using regular detergent in cold water when it's not for it. The other thing is it could be fabric softener as you described, and that's something that can cause a film. And, the third one is that the [transmission](#) itself is leaking up through the center post. I would remove the agitator on that, and on this one if you take the fabric softener dispenser off the top there's a small cap that you can pull out and then there's a, I think it's a seven sixteenths

bolt that holds that down. You'll need an extension so you can take the [agitator](#) off and see if there's oil that looks like its kind of coming from that area. If that is the case then I'd suspect the trans or some other wearing parts in the drive system that's [leaking](#) into the tub.

DARRYL

Okay. All right.

JOHN SOWDEN

So, those are the three things. You can start out trying to get rid of it by just using really hot water. Run an empty load, maybe take an old towel that you're not attached to, clean it out and start over and see if changing any of the other things as far as usage of detergent and fabric softener help. It could be a user error or a mechanical failure; either one can cause that or a lot of times it's hard to say which.

DARRYL

All right. Well, I knew it shouldn't go bad in that length of time but we've had several things go wrong with it and the [dryer](#) that's the same age, and now this is going on so she was considering whether we had to go get a new set or what we'd be able to do, because it seems like every time they come out it's one hundred and fifty dollars or more. So that was my question.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Hope we answered it.

DARRYL

Thank you very much.

Maytag Electric Stove Heats Up to the Set Temperature and Then Shuts Off

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Here's Bill, in Sterling Heights, on the Appliance Repair. Go ahead please, Bill.

BILL

Hello. Yeah, thanks for taking my call. The wife's got this [Maytag stove](#), electric, and she loves the stove, but the only thing is she pushes the button to get it to heat up to 350 degrees, and it will come on, but when it goes off it will not come back on. And, also the [clock](#), she tried to change from fast time to slow time and she can't get it to change.

JOHN SOWDEN

So if you set it at 350 degrees it does reach temperature?

BILL

It does reach the temperature, but it won't come back on once it goes off.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. And, if you set it to bake and you set it to broil do you see both [elements](#) glowing red?

BILL

No, the bottom one will work but not the top.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. Well, the upper element when you set it to broil should come on. In the pre-heat cycle regular bake it should come on for a short period of time, but normally they don't glow bright red, it's just extra heat to get you up to speed faster. If the [elements](#) are okay then I would suspect you have a problem with the [oven sensor](#) which you can check out with an [ohmmeter](#). Normally, at room temperature, it's about a thousand or eleven hundred ohms. But from what you're describing, I'd lean more towards the [clock](#) or one of the relays is sticking on the control board and it isn't firing to turn it back on for the bake.

BILL

Okay. I've got a man going to check that out for me. I can't do it because I'm half blind. But, I'll have the man check it out for me and go from there.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, it could be, if it's a new circuit board, you're probably going to look at a few hundred dollar repair on that unit.

BILL

I talked to him yesterday and he said the clock itself is around two hundred dollars.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah. It all depends on the unit and all those things but basically, the electronics are great and when they fail they're expensive. It's like anything else out there today.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

It's like having a Corvette. I had a Corvette once. And when that speedometer went out it was all over.

JOHN SOWDEN

Was that from spinning it around?

JOHN MCCULLOCH

No, not me! Heavens no!

GE Profile Glass Cook Top Surface Burner Turns On When In the Off Position

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Let's get back to the phones. We'll go to Michelle, in Romeo, on the Appliance Repair Show. Hi Michelle, go ahead, please.

MICHELLE

Hi. I have a problem with a radiant cook top, glass cook top, which is a [GE Profile](#). And one of the [burners](#), just one out of the four, after you're done using it and you shut it off, it will come back on. Periodically, it will get hot, turn red, and then go off. So, currently we are shutting the cook top off at the fuse box.

JOHN SOWDEN

That's a good precautionary step there. So, when you actually turn the [switch](#) to off, the burner still intermittently turns itself on, huh?

MICHELLE

Correct.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, the only thing I can think of that would do that is the switch itself for the control behind the [knob](#). It sends power to that burner and could have internal contacts that are sticking and firing up that burner. It's possible that you have some other wiring problems that are feeding power to that [burner](#), but from what you're describing...is this burner the one you use the most?

MICHELLE

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

That's the one that normally the switch wears out the fastest on. So I would think you probably have a bad control switch for that burner.

MICHELLE

Is that something that a repairman would replace, just that one switch?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes. If all the other ones are working okay, then that's something they could replace just the one for that particular unit. You want to make sure to get the right switch, if it's a [six-inch or an eight-inch burner](#) because the switch is made to interact with the burner, so that when you set it to medium it's at medium and low. If you put the wrong switch in you can have situations where you have temperature regulation problems. If you get the [model number](#) as it reads off the unit and go to our website [repairclinic.com](#) and put it in, you'll see a picture of all the common parts for your unit and you can get an idea of what the cost is for the switch. If you decide to tackle it yourself...this is something where people have to be fairly comfortable with working with electricity before they take it on—otherwise you could have a repairperson come out and you may want to order a switch

and have it waiting for them, especially this time of year if you want it working for the holidays because the countdown is on.

MICHELLE

I know! And the exact name of that switch again was?

JOHN SOWDEN

It would be the [surface control unit](#), and they're normally listed by the six or the eight-inch burners; that is how they're designated.

MICHELLE

Fantastic. Well thank you very, very much. You have a nice holiday!

JOHN SOWDEN

I'm sorry that your stove isn't working a week before Christmas, that's really tough.

That's all right; we have many other blessings to be thankful for.

Kenmore Upright Freezer Temperature Alarm Going Off and Making a Clicking Noise

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And now to Philip, in Newport, on NewsTalk 760 WJR. Go ahead, Philip.

PHILIP

I have a [Kenmore upright freezer](#), and yesterday I came home and the [temperature alarm](#) was going off on it. When I went out and checked it, it was approximately seventeen degrees in there; as I was standing there looking at it you could hear like a [click from the back](#) associated with what appeared to be a power drain, like the compressor was trying to start but couldn't start. I went to your website last night and I found an item you call a [compressor starting device](#)?

JOHN SOWDEN

That's correct.

PHILIP

I don't know, is there a possibility that's gone bad, or am I looking at getting a new [freezer](#) here?

JOHN SOWDEN

What you heard was the compressor-starting device or the [relay and overload assembly](#) trying to start the compressor. The compressor you can check with an [ohmmeter](#) to see if it's electrically failed and we actually have instructions for that on the website as well. If that checks okay, it could still be mechanically frozen up. But if the compressor checks okay electrically, most often the problem is in the relay overload package, and those are the components that shift the compressor from the start to the run winding. So in an

initial startup, you are incorporating the start and run windings, and then as it gets up to speed it will run on just the run winding of that motor which saves energy and all that good stuff. There's also a [run capacitor](#) it looks like on your unit. That's the little square one-inch by one-inch black box mounted there. If that's failed, that will also cause it not to start. So you can check that again with an ohmmeter and again we have instructions on how to do that on the website too. You can check these things out. If worse comes to worse you can just try a new package for that, and if it doesn't go after that then it probably is a bad compressor. And yes, at that point it would probably be time for a new one.

PHILIP

Okay. Thank you very much.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, you got a project today...well, not today!

PHILIP

No, I figure I'll be busy with snow blowing today.

1995 Speed Queen Washing Machine Shaking Violently

JOHN SOWDEN

Willie in Novi, we'll go to him and see what problems he's having today.

WILLIE

I've got a question for you. I've got a set of about twelve year old [Speed Queen](#) washer and dryer, and on the washer, on the spin cycle, as probably many washing machines out there, it shakes out pretty heavily. I do understand you have to balance the load as best you can, but it didn't do it the first few years that I had it, so I'm just wondering if there are any replaceable parts or wearing parts in there like [springs](#)?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes. Basically leveling is something that what a lot of people do when they level it is they adjust the [legs](#) and then they find out well, it's not perfectly level so they screw another leg down from the cabinet, and by the time they get it level the machine is sitting another inch or two up in the air from where it was at. The ideal way to do it is to screw the legs all the way up into the cabinet so that you have the lowest center of gravity possible, and then adjust the machine. It doesn't have to be as perfectly level as just stable and not rocking on the floor. That's the most important thing. And, have the legs up as far inside the cabinet as you can without the cabinet itself lying on the floor. That's the first step for addressing the shaking problem. In your particular machine, there's what they call a snubber pad, and that is a pad that's between what they call the pivot dome or the place for the [transmission](#) and [motor](#) and tub is all mounted in the base, and that's kind of a shock absorber, and that can wear out, especially after ten years. With that, the [springs](#) themselves can over time get a little stretched out. From what you're describing, I would start with removing the front panel, there's a couple of screws on the bottom of

that. You can open it up. I'd look and see if you have any leaks, any signs of oil anything like that, so if you have any other problems you can address it then and decide if you want to put any money into the machine. If everything looks all right and the machine's operating properly, then you're probably going to have to replace that lower snubber pad. And, it might not hurt to get a new set of springs, too. You're looking at probably sixty or seventy dollars worth of parts and about an hour to an hour and a half of your time.

WILLIE

How many springs would need to be replaced? Are those on the top side of the drum or the bottom side?

JOHN SOWDEN

They're on the bottom side. Once you remove the front panel it will all be a lot clearer to you as far as what you're dealing with there. There's normally a series of [springs](#) around the outer tub that hook to the base.

WILLIE

Okay. Those springs are sold as a set or individual?

JOHN SOWDEN

Depends on the unit, and some are have both. Normally, the springs are five to ten bucks a piece.

WILLIE

Now those springs, is the snubber pad hard to get to?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes, you have to basically unhook all the [hoses](#), wiring etc. to the inner substructure there and pull it right out of the machine. And then get at the base, so you also have to remove the lower [pulley](#), so yeah, it's an hour or two job. If it's you're first time at it you might spend a little more time, but if you just take your time and mark where things go it's something that an average tool type do-it-yourselfer guy can accomplish, and that will help the shaking. But again with the front panel removed, you can put it in spin and there might be something obvious, you might find a broken spring or something that jumps right out at you as being the problem.

WILLIE

All right. Super, thanks!

2006 Kenmore Side By Side Refrigerator: Water from the Dispenser Tastes like Plastic

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And here is Jim in Lund, Michigan on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead, Jim.

JIM

Good morning, thanks for taking my call. I've got a question about my [refrigerator](#). It's probably about a year, maybe a year and three or four months old. I just hooked up the water to it, it's a [Kenmore](#), and it's got the water and ice in the freezer side. Ran five or six trays of ice through it, I've run probably three or four gallons of water through the water dispenser. And the ice doesn't seem to be a problem, but the [water side still tastes like plastic](#) smells.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, it might take a while. You say you've had this machine in operation for over a year and you're just now hooking the water up to it?

JIM

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

And the [filter](#), you flushed that out, that's part of the running a few gallons of water through it?

JIM

Correct.

JOHN SOWDEN

That's something that's probably just going to take time to get rid of. If it tastes like the plastic, what happens is there's a series of tubing that's behind the [crisper drawers](#) in your refrigerator section that acts as the [water tank](#) and that water just sits in there. So the more you use it, it should get better. Especially if the filter's new, everything else, I would give it a week or two. Or just, you know, run quite a bit more water through it trying to flush that out, but it will take a little while because it all sits in that plastic tubing for a while to get rid of the taste or smell.

JIM

Okay, but the one thing that I've been told or suggested by other people is does this filter suddenly deteriorate at all, by not being used?

JOHN SOWDEN

Does the filter deteriorate? They're made to be installed and used straight away. If it continues I would change the filter as my next recommendation, but basically since you've had no water to it or through it, it should be okay.

JIM

Okay, that's what I kind of thought too. All right, I'll just hook a garden hose up to it and away we go!

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah. If it's the [plastic taste](#) that you're getting versus an odor or another water stagnant type taste, then—

JIM

Right, my water's good, it tastes fine, but I'm just getting that plastic taste.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right, and it goes through the [filter](#) before it gets to the other components, so it's more than likely just that the [plastic tank](#) there that over time should hopefully dissipate, but as this isn't a brand new thing and you just hooked it up. But if it keeps up I'd change the filter just to see if it helps, but it sounds like the problem is beyond the filter to me.

JIM

Okay. And you guys sell filters?

JOHN SOWDEN

We sure do.

JIM

Okay, sounds good. Thank you!

Kenmore Washing Machine Not Agitating Properly

JOHN MCCULLOCH

With a question on a [Kenmore washer](#), Brian in Macomb, on the Appliance Repair Show. Brian, go ahead.

BRIAN

Yeah, I got a washer with an [agitator](#). The top part of it doesn't work properly, it's like it's stripped out, the two-piece.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah.

BRIAN

How hard is that to fix, or is it worth fixing?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, it's really a fairly easy repair and fairly inexpensive repair, the two most happily received words I can give people.

BRIAN

Sounds good.

JOHN SOWDEN

Actually, there's just a set of plastic what they call [dog ears](#) because I guess that's what they look like in there. To get it off, you just take off the top of the agitator, if you have a fabric softener dispenser, if not there will be a cap you pop off, and then there's another clear plastic cap with a rubber o-ring that you can reach down with your fingers and pull out. Then below that is going to be one bolt, and once you remove the bolt the whole agitator will come off. The easiest way to do it is to stand on the lower part of the agitator, hold it with your feet, and then kind of pull straight up; you will then separate the two and the inner workings. I think it costs between eight and fifteen dollars for the [rebuild kit](#), and it's just a bunch of plastic cogs that are inside that [agitator](#). And, it will make a big difference. First, it probably sounds terrible when it's running right now, when they start to wear out, and it will also help as far as the turns of clothes in your tub, or basically how much it pushes the clothes through the water.

BRIAN

Yeah, we can't put much in without it getting all stuck and everything. Only the bottom one works.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, it's a fairly common wearing part and it doesn't take a whole lot of tools and/or time and/or money to get it repaired so, this is good news before Christmas no large repair bills.

BRIAN

What is that that I need, the [agitator repair kit](#)?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes, it's either called the [dog ears](#) or the agitator repair kit. If you get the [model number](#) as it reads off the tag on your washing machine and you dump that into our website into the search field that we have in the upper left hand corner, you'll probably see it on the first page that comes up.

BRIAN

All right.

JOHN SOWDEN

We try to make it as easy as we can for you.

GE Profile Electric Dryer Taking Too Long To Dry

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Brenda, in Belleville, has a problem with a [GE Profile dryer](#) on the Appliance Repair Show.

BRENDA

My dryer is [taking a lot longer to dry](#). The dial, when it's on the easy care automatic setting, it doesn't move, it just stays in one place.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, that's generally a good sign that the [dryer's not heating](#). Normally, it only advances the timer when there's the proper amount of heat in the drum, so you have to run it through two cycles now to get the clothes dry?

BRENDA

Yeah, I have to set the timer usually and then go check it.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. Is this gas or electric?

BRENDA

It is electric.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. Do you notice any heat at all in the drum when it's running? The clothes, are they warm?

BRENDA

It does dry. It's just that it takes a lot longer.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, the first thing I would recommend is on [long dry times](#), for any dryer, clean the vent.

BRENDA

Okay, that was done.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay and you're still having issues with it?

BRENDA

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. And after that I would say your other problem would be in the [heating element](#) or the [thermostat](#) that controls the heat in the drum, either one. You have to basically pull the drum out of that machine in order to get at the element, which it sounds a lot worse than it is. If you go to our website, [repairclinic.com](#), and you go to the [Contact Us](#) section and put your email address in, you'll actually give us some information about your dryer, how old it is, and we have instructions on how to disassemble that and access the various components in the dryer. So you can kind of get a step-by-step printout there and go after it, or you could buy the [manual](#). But from what you're describing, long dry times are airflow related to start with, either too long a vent, a plugged vent, a plugged

blower housing, and if that's okay then it's in the heating cycle which again would be the element or the thermostats that send power or allow power to reach those elements.

BRENDA

Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

There are your marching instructions for today.

Kenmore Electric Range Surface Burners Are Working Intermittently

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Carol, in Lapeer, you're next here on the Appliance Repair Show.

CAROL

Hello. I have a drop-in [Kenmore range](#) and I've been having some trouble with it for a while. I'm trying to determine what to replace. I've already replaced the [burners](#) because they weren't working, going on and off intermittently. And then I found that where the burners plug in, that's all deteriorating. So I've got two different parts here and I don't know which would be the best ones for us to use. They sold us at the store the original replacement [terminal block](#) with the wires, and they're really long wires and we're not sure where they go. Otherwise, they showed us this other packet where it's the original one says don't cut the wires, you know don't splice it in there, but this other part says that the heat shrink sleeves that you can use where it's easier to install, and cut the wires, it's from the top there. So I don't know which one's safer or better to use.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, let's back up Carol and find out what problem you had originally with the stove. And hopefully we can determine what we need to do to repair it. What issues were you having when you started down this repair road?

CAROL

The [burners](#) weren't heating up.

JOHN SOWDEN

The burners were not heating up—all the burners, or just one burner?

CAROL

Two of the burners, and we'd move the burner itself, it made it work if you jiggled a little bit.

JOHN SOWDEN

So when you removed the [burners](#) you noticed that the ends of the electrical burner were pitted and...

CAROL

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay, so what you've done is you put new burners into an equally pitted and worn out receptacle and you have to jiggle them to get that electrical connection.

CAROL

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

And now you want to put in new receptacles, so you're starting with nice clean metal-to-metal contact and hopefully more years of service on your stove.

CAROL

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. As far as the [receptacles](#) go, we always recommend that you use the manufacturer's specified part for that, but there are so many [electric stoves](#) out there and there are a lot of receptacles that will work from one brand to another. The biggest thing is making sure that it mounts properly so that when you put the burner in and plug it back in that it sits flat back in the [burner pan](#) and you're not having the pan not set evenly.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And I'm going to do this if we may. Carol, can you hold on for one second?

CAROL

Sure.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Okay, what we're going to do is take a break for the news because there are a lot of people out there expecting traffic and weather information right now, and then we'll come back to you and we'll be sure to finish the conversation between you and John Sowden...Carol, we're back.

CAROL

Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, you made it through the commercials, Carol, and I've had a little time to look at the stove you have and hopefully I can answer some questions for you. Your question is: which [terminal block](#) do I replace? There's the one that's the direct replacement and it comes as the terminal block receptacle for your burner and it comes with the wiring that is supposed to go all the way back to the [control panel](#) and switch and replace the wiring and the terminal block as one piece. And then they also make a repair kit that's just the terminal block with about three or four inches of wire and some [wire nuts](#) and some

shrink-wrap tubing. Either one should work fine. I'd recommend running the wiring and all that good stuff, but if the existing wiring at the other terminal block isn't in too bad a shape you can just cut those two or three inches of wiring off your existing, and use the wire nuts provided and the shrink tape, you can use a heat gun or even a bake light if you're careful, and shrink that so you're not getting any liquid or spillovers into that connection. And that should be okay to go with the other kit, and the other one is a lot less expensive so that's probably driving part of your question, right?

CAROL

Right. Plus, I didn't know if I had to take the whole stove out of the cabinet area to get to the wiring.

JOHN SOWDEN

To run the wires back to the [switch](#), yes you would. And again, that's the best way to do it if it comes with that, but the other kits have been out there for a long time and they work well. Just make sure the wiring connections are secure, and I'd inspect the other [burners](#). If the other burners are starting to show signs of pitting or wear, if you take an emery board or some sand paper and clean those up till they're nice and shiny again and hopefully you'll get some more miles out of the other burners. But normally the ones that burn out are the ones you use the most or that you make popcorn on where you're shaking the burner all the time.

CAROL

Okay and you said if we go with this other one where you use the shrink wrap that we have to make sure when cleaning not to get that wet?

JOHN SOWDEN

The shrink-wrap is there to secure the connection and to kind of waterproof that connection because there are always spillovers on the stove. But it's fairly common to replace those and splice into the existing... a lot of manufacturers make that type of repair kit.

CAROL

Okay, would electrical tape protect that or no?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, it doesn't hurt to put some electrical tape on there too. Just secure it and again try to waterproof it a little bit if you can, in case you should run into any spillovers.

CAROL

Okay, well thank you very much! You guys have a happy holiday!

1994 Kenmore Side By Side Refrigerator/Freezer Dispenser No Water to the Icemaker

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Now we go to Randy, in Belleville, with a question on a freezer, here on the Appliance Repair Show. Randy, go ahead please.

RANDY

I've got a [Kenmore side by side](#), it's about thirteen, fourteen years old, and it's got the icemaker with the water in the door. The [water line](#) that went into the freezer broke about six months ago and I replaced it about four weeks ago. I've got water coming out the door, but there's [no water going in the icemaker](#).

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay and how long was the unit not operating? Did you turn the water off to it?

RANDY

Oh, I'd say maybe a year.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. Well, there's the [water inlet valve](#) for that, it's one valve that feeds two features, one's the water in the door and the other one's the icemaker. So it's possible the icemaker side of that valve has failed, either restricted internally, or after sitting out for a period of time the diaphragms in there could be stuck. The other thing to inspect is the tube that goes from the back wall of the freezer to that [icemaker](#). If that's frozen up, you want to defrost that, and normally a low water pressure situation would cause that. So since you put it back in operation the icemaker has not worked, correct?

RANDY

No, and also it used to be when you'd hear the icemaker working and hear the ice cubes fall out and you'd hear a click and "shhhhh". I don't hear that click.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right, the buzz, that's the [solenoid](#) you hear opening that allows the water to the icemaker for seven seconds, I think is the time out on that. So if you don't hear the click, it could be that the solenoid has failed. You can check it with an [ohmmeter](#), you can test cycle the icemaker and see if you hear the click while you're standing there. But yeah, it's either the icemaker itself is not telling the water valve to open, which is kind of not very common, or the water valve itself has failed.

RANDY

Or the water line has frozen.

JOHN SOWDEN

Or that, but even if the line has frozen, you'll still hear that click and the water running. But what happens normally with that tube being frozen, the [water just runs down the back of your refrigerator](#), and then you find out when you have a warped wood floor.

RANDY

I don't have anything like that under the freezer.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay, good.

RANDY

I'll go ahead and take a look at that valve. It sounds like that might be my problem.

JOHN SOWDEN

Good!

1998 Jenn-Air Double Oven Touch Pad is Discolored

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And, we go now to Clare, in Milford, here on the Appliance Repair Show.

Hi Clare, go ahead please.

CLARE

I have a [Jenn-Air double oven](#). On the control panel for the top, well, the control panel above both ovens is a [touch pad](#) and the outer shell on this thing, I think its plastic; we've done a lot of broiling over the years and it's about nine years old.

JOHN SOWDEN

Is it discolored or warped?

CLARE

It's discolored, and the spot for the cancel to turn the oven off has completely busted away. We actually use the back of an ink pen to shut it off now.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, that's resourceful!

CLARE

Well, it works at least, and I have to go downstairs and turn off the circuit breaker. And so my problem is I have had a service person come out, from a pretty well known national company, and they charged me to say that parts are not available. And then on the second occasion, my [dishwasher](#) was getting serviced and I asked the guy, because it's the same brand, and he says that nine years was a good life and it may be worth it to get a new [double oven](#). But I just can't believe that after nine years I can't get a replacement part. I'm pretty sure that actually the control panel in the background works. Because where I have this hole I can see the button and the button works.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right.

CLARE

And everything works on it, except for my [vent](#), because I guess I have two problems and I think they're both related to using my broiler so much. My vent, it vents out to the front and that has warped. And when I use it to bake that will drip water down from it. So I know I'm getting, well I don't want to say too much condensation out of that, because it's always vented to the front and before this problem I never had water dripping out of it.

JOHN SOWDEN

The water dripping problem really depends on what you're baking, on the condition of your door gasket; all those things as far as the vent and the airflow through the oven. If you have a lot of moisture in your recipe, to get water around the door is something that is not abnormal. I have looked into your [touch pad](#) and it does show to be discontinued. It's something that the manufacturer has discontinued.

CLARE

I can't believe it!

JOHN SOWDEN

Well normally, after seven or eight years they don't have to carry the parts to meet their obligations, but most do for years and years. The problem you have, with it being a double [wall oven](#), is your kitchen is kind of built around it. Your cabinets are built around it. And they're not giving those things away, they're pretty expensive, especially [Jenn-Air](#).

CLARE

Well, I was hoping to just fix it rather than have to replace it.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right. Now there are places that have some refurb things, you might be able to find something that way, but there's not a place I know of to even have that part rebuilt. So I don't want to say you're out of luck, but I don't show that we have one in stock, so unless you can find somebody who has a control panel on the shelf, you might have to replace it.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And we're sorry to have to give you that news, but that's the way it is.