

## Appliance Repair Show Transcript – January 6, 2008

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### 1998 GE Dishwasher Not Draining Completely

JOHN MCCULLOCH

We'll start things out with a question on a [GE dishwasher](#) from Stan in Macomb, here on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead please, Stan.

STAN

Yeah, I've got about an eight or ten year old GE dishwasher and the difficulty I've got is, after it goes through the cycle, it doesn't matter what mode I've got it in, I'll have a half inch to a three quarter inch amount of water depth of [water in the bottom](#) of the dishwasher. I've gone to the back of the dishwasher, I've taken apart the, I guess you might say from the inside to the pump, I've checked to see if there are any restrictions to the drain tube going to the garbage disposal and did all that, put it back together and I've still got the same difficulty. I took out some debris, but that wasn't the difficulty.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok. When it does to drain, do you hear a clunk when it goes in the drain? There's a solenoid on the [motor](#) that turns a flapper inside the [pump](#)—

STAN

No, I haven't noticed that, but what I've done just at least to get some decent hot water into the machine is, I'll do start and reset real quick and it will drain the rest of the water pretty much but not completely. I still have enough water in there.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok. From what you're describing there's two scenarios that are the most common. One is, as I stated earlier, there's on the side of the motor assembly, if you take your lower panel off you'll see a little solenoid, it looks like a black battery that's been cut in half. And what happens is, during the drain cycle, the timer or [control board](#) sends current to that and it actuates a lever, which then diverts the drain water to the [drain pump](#) and quits circulating it through the [wash arms](#). In order for that to also work, there is in the back of the unit, you should have a little strainer mounted in the back of your machine and there are a few screws that retain that. If you take that cover off, you'll see in the center, there's a little what you call a piston and nut assembly. That's just a [check valve](#) that has to seat properly in order for that unit to drain, and that is something that wears out more often than the drain assembly in the pump. That unscrews and you screw a new one in, and they're about ten or fifteen bucks. I would just run it through the cycle and listen. If you hear it stop washing and there's a "thump" or a "clunk" sound, which is the solenoid operating, and it's still not draining, then I would look at that piston and nut assembly. It's pretty easy to replace, and not too hard to access, but you have to remove the lower rack and take a few screws out along that grid on the back and it's underneath there.

STAN

I've seen it before. I know where it's at.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok.

### **Tappan Oven Cycles On and then Shuts Off**

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And, a question on a [Tappan oven](#), from Alan in Utica on the Appliance Repair Show. Good morning, Alan. Go ahead, please.

ALAN

Yeah, I've got this Tappan oven with electronic controls, and what's going on is I'll turn the oven on and it will get up to temperature and then it will cycle maybe once or twice and then it will shut down. I replaced the [bake igniter](#); just on a chance, but that didn't do anything.

JOHN SOWDEN

You say you've already replaced the bake igniter?

ALAN

Yeah.

JOHN SOWDEN

And you say when it shuts down it's not calling for the oven to turn back on then?

ALAN

Right.

JOHN SOWDEN

So the [igniter is not glowing](#) and it's not lighting, it's just that the igniter is not glowing at all?

ALAN

No, I'll turn it to 350 and it will heat, it will get up to 350 degrees and then shut off like it's supposed to, then will turn back on again five minutes later, and then the next time it's supposed to turn back on again, instead of turning back on it just completely shuts off.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok, so does the oven indicator, does the oven "on" light come on?

ALAN

No, everything shuts off.

JOHN SOWDEN

The [control board](#) and everything?

ALAN

Yeah.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok. Well, from what you're describing I would suspect that you've probably got a bad circuit board or a bad connection on the board. If you've got a small crack in the board, what will happen is that heat that comes from the oven and up through the vent assembly can expand it. If you've got a bad ribbon connection or a bad connection can cause it to fail then, or the heat itself can cause the board to expand just a little bit and wherever that small crack in the board is, it will open up. Is this something that works fairly consistently the first time or two, and then it conks out?

ALAN

Yeah, it seems like something with the heat.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right, right, and from what you're describing again I'd check all the connections on the [circuit board](#) and re-secure them and try it. If it continues to work, then great. If not, then I would suspect that something in the board is [overheating](#). The other thing that you can check is the [oven sensor](#): most of those are between a thousand and eleven hundred ohms at room temperature. It's possible that's opening up, but normally if the sensor fails you get a [fault code](#), and the thing will start beeping at you and say, "Replace this part".

ALAN

The circuit boards are probably pretty expensive, right?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, the circuit boards are between one hundred and two hundred dollars.

ALAN

Yeah. And the sensor's probably pretty cheap?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah. But again, that would be a real rare case as far as being intermittent, and then normally when it fails the [circuit board](#) will read that that has failed and you'll get a [fault code](#). For the whole thing to just quit, normally it's something in the board that's failing.

ALAN

Ok. I'll give that a shot then. Thank you.

### **Microwave Oven Sparks**

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Here's a problem with a [microwave](#) putting on a fireworks show from Jerry in Farmington, on the Appliance Repair Show. Good morning, Jerry.

JERRY

Good morning to you and Happy New Year. About three weeks ago, I turned the microwave on and it started this fireworks business. And I thought maybe I had taken a dish or something and scrubbed it with this metal thing and little particles stayed on it and that's what caused it. And then it ran for a while very nicely, and then man it really just started in and then I've just been afraid to turn it on.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok, you're getting a lot of popping and [sparking inside the microwave](#)?

JERRY

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, that can be caused from, as you described, metal or other container. A lot of people that reheat cartons of food that have the staples still in them will find that to be the cause,

where the microwaves are looking for something to heat up and they'll go right to the metal source. If that's not the case the other two things that can cause that are: one, if the interior of the microwave is dirty or has a grease buildup, because then again it starts cooking the debris inside the microwave. Most often there's what they call a waveguide cover or a [stirrer cover](#), and all that is, is a little mica piece. It looks like cardboard that covers the hole, and it's called a waveguide.

JERRY

I see it.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes. That's where the microwaves come into the cavity to bounce around. It goes through that shield and that shield is there to keep debris from getting up into the waveguide, as well as moisture and other things. So if that's dirty or if you see any burn marks on it, that's probably the problem. You can either order a new one and slide it in, or sometimes you can buy them by the sheet if it's an older unit, and cut it to fit. If that's not the case, then you could have from using it in the past, where you start getting burn spots inside the [waveguide cover](#) or the interior channel where these microwaves come out. If that's the case then it's at times hard to repair because you can't get at it, and it might be time for a new [microwave](#) if you've got a burn hole in there. So any bare metal spots in the cavity will do that, the waveguide cover being burnt, or even a food buildup on there will do it. Also, if the unit has what they call a stirrer assembly or an antenna assembly, and all that is, is when the microwaves come out of this chute, it's just basically a beater that distributes the microwaves in the cavity more uniformly. So as it's running it actually disperses those into the cavity to cook evenly, and if that has failed it will cause the unit to spark. A lot of the newer units, a lot of commercial units still have them but a lot of the newer units just have the waveguide cover and the entrance, and then the microwaves just disperse and bounce around the cavity until they find your food. So I'd start by inspecting that cover.

JERRY

I just took a flashlight and looked in there. They do have these grids on them and everything, but the one you were talking about, it has a big burned spot on the top.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, there you go. Time for a new one.

JERRY

You mean time for a new [microwave](#)?

JOHN SOWDEN

No, you should be able to just replace that cover.

JERRY

And then, because I have a computer but I am very illiterate, unfortunately, is this some place where I can just go to a store?

JOHN SOWDEN

No. This is a higher microwave, so you probably will have to special order this part, and we don't have all the current books on a lot of this stuff. But if you give us a call at 888-34-Fixit, they can research this for you and get back to you and let you know the status of availability of this part, which is the stirrer cover.

JERRY

Is this during the weekend?

JOHN SOWDEN

We're open right now! Just give us your model and serial number off of the machine.

JERRY

And [where would that model number be?](#)

JOHN SOWDEN

It's going to be on a sticker inside the cavity, or if you open up the door it will be along the framework either on the door or on the control panel where it meets up against the door. You'll see a sticker that says model and serial number. Is this a [countertop unit?](#)

JERRY

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok. It's also possible that it would be on the back.

JERRY

Oh, I see it: it's a white strip. Ok, well thank you so much.

### **1998 Whirlpool Top Loading Washing Machine Making Noises during the Spin Cycle**

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And we'll go now to a question on an old [Whirlpool washer](#) from Dave in Sterling Heights on the Appliance Repair Show. Good morning Dave, go ahead please.

DAVE

Yeah, I have the Whirlpool washing machine, it's about ten or eleven years old. While it's washing and while it's spinning it's making like a whirring or whining noise.

JOHN SOWDEN

Is this a top loader?

DAVE

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok. And you say it makes for wash and spin it makes a noise?

DAVE

While it's agitating you hear an "rrr-rrr-rrr", like that, and when it's spinning it's like a whining or a whirring noise.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, it could be that you have a bad [motor](#) bearing that's causing that, or the pump itself could be causing this if [it's leaking](#) and you could have some water that's dripping into the bearing. If this is a [direct drive unit](#), if you go to our website we have instructions on how to disassemble that and get into the interior portion of it so you can make a physical inspection. The problem might be pretty evident as you get in there and have a look around. It's also possible that the [gearcase](#), the transmission and the drive train are worn. But normally something constant like that, it could either be in the [coupling](#), if it's starting to wear, or the bearing in the pump there is starting to go out. Because it turns the whole time that the unit's on.

DAVE

Right.

JOHN SOWDEN

But yeah, if you go to our website, [repairclinic.com](#), go to the [Contact Us](#) section, you put in your email address and you answer some questions about how old your washer is, what kind it is, and then you'll be taken to a series of what we call our Self-Help feature. It will have some titles like "[washer not spinning](#)", "how to access this unit", and it will give you a step-by-step on how to disassemble that and make the whole process a lot quicker for you.

DAVE

So you think it could easily be the pump or the motor, or even the transmission?

JOHN SOWDEN

Normally if it's something that turns all the time, it could be in the trans, but if it's been doing it for a while, normally something will wear out and lock up if it's internal, although not always. You might find when you get it apart that if you look at the pump you might see where there's evidence of a small [water leak](#) that's coming out of the center of the [pump assembly](#).

DAVE

Would you see that even if it's not running?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, you can normally see the water residue from leaks on washers and dishwashers because of the soap that's in there; you always see a little white trace of debris wherever the water's dripping from.

DAVE

So you say there's no belt, it's a [direct drive](#)?

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, if it's eleven years old, then it's more than likely a direct drive. The [belt](#) stuff they phased out in the late eighties.

DAVE

Yeah, I think it's about '96 or '97 that we got it. Is this very difficult to take this apart?

JOHN SOWDEN

Nope. You can do it all with a screwdriver and the instructions. Otherwise you're going to be prying the back panel off and trying to tip it over, and that's why I say it's easier to print off the step by step....

DAVE

Oh, you can actually print something off from this [repairclinic.com](#)?

JOHN SOWDEN

You certainly can.

DAVE

Ok. All right, well thank you very much!

### **2004 Whirlpool Washer Wrapping Clothes around the Agitator and Making Noises**

JOHN MCCULLOCH

We're taking questions on major appliances, like this one, a Whirlpool washer from Nancy in Wyandotte on the Appliance Repair Show. Hi Nancy, go ahead please.

NANCY

Hi. I have a [Whirlpool washing machine](#). It was purchased in '04, and when it agitates my clothes are wrapping around the agitator and the water is whishing around like a whirlpool.

JOHN SOWDEN

The water is whishing around like a whirlpool? Does the [agitator](#) go back in forth or does it just turn in one direction?

NANCY

When I kind of peek in there it looks like it's going back and forth a little bit, but when I open up the lid, the water is whishing like when you're in a swimming pool, you know,

making a whirlpool. And you also can hear this noise, like you know when you're riding a ten-speed, and you're switching gears and the chain is making that noise, that's kind of what it sounds like.

JOHN SOWDEN

That "tick-tick-tick" sound?

NANCY

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Now I'm the one making noises on the radio.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Listen, we've got it going both ways! People call in with their noises and then you try to duplicate their noises! It's working out very well.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, inside the [agitator](#) there's a set of four little plastic, what they call [dog ears](#), and what they do is as it ratchets back and forth it's supposed to grab the agitator and turn it. It's possible that those have worn out. Do you notice that this does this with one load more than another? As far as more clothes in it, heavy duty...

NANCY

It does it no matter what type of load it is. But it gets like, if you put a large load in it makes a louder noise.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right.

NANCY

And I'll tell you what I did, I washed a pair of tennis shoes in there, and ever since then, that's when it started making that noise.

JOHN SOWDEN

Hmm. Well, normally, the problem with washing stuff like that is it throws the center off; it beats around quite a bit because all the weight goes to one side or another in the tub. But it's done every day, and the machines are pretty sturdy and meant to hold up to that type of thing. Now if the water is swirling around, it's possible that the tub is spinning, while it's agitating, and if that's the case then you've got a problem in the drive train, in the [transmission](#) or the [basket drive assembly](#). The brake is not engaging to hold the tub in place when it's agitating. And what you can do is if you open the lid--and I don't recommend doing this other than for diagnostic purposes—but if you open the lid and you see that little pin sticking out from your lid that goes into the hole on the top cover, what happens is when you close your lid that little pin protrudes down and makes a switch underneath the lid. And if you take a pencil or something like it, preferably

nothing metal, and hold that down, if you press that then you can look inside it while it's washing and get a better idea of what its doing. If it is spinning and agitating at the same time, then you've got problems in the drive train and you might want to call for service on that. If it's just noisy and [it's not agitating](#) properly, then I would suspect that the inner portion of the agitator needs to be rebuilt. It sounds a lot worse than it is, because it's only ten or fifteen dollars worth of parts. Only one bolt is needed to do that so it's a pretty easy do-it-yourselfer type job.

NANCY

It is?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes.

NANCY

OK. Because like when I lifted the lid, and looked in there, what I can see is the drum part isn't moving, it's the center, you know the agitator.

JOHN SOWDEN

Then that sounds to me like it's not ratcheting, and it's either in the [dog ears](#) inside the agitator itself...it's still possible that you have a transmission problem, but it's not that old of a unit and those plastic parts are made to wear out. That's what they're for, to take the abuse rather than the gears inside the [transmission](#). To take the agitator off, all you have to do is pop off your fabric softener dispenser and then you'll see about a three inch wide dome in there and you can reach in there and pull that out. It has two little wings—it looks like butterfly wings on it—and you can pull that out and there's a bolt inside there. You just take the bolt out and pull straight up on the agitator. From there you can pop it apart and you'll see the pieces I'm describing.

NANCY

Ok, well thank you very much.

### **2005 Icemaker in Refrigerator/Freezer Producing Hollow Ice Cubes**

JOHN SOWDEN

And we go now to a question on a [refrigerator](#) from Susan in Clinton Township on the Appliance Repair Show.

SUSAN

My question is, my son bought a refrigerator three years ago, and the ice cubes turn out to be hollow inside. Now this is not on the door, it's strictly in the freezer.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right. Has this been a situation since day one or has this just popped up?

SUSAN

I'd say for the last two months.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok. Well, does this unit have a [water filter](#) on it?

SUSAN

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

And when's the last time that was changed?

SUSAN

Oh, I don't know.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah. Normally the most common problem with hollow cubes or [small cubes](#) is water supply. The ice maker is told to fill for a certain amount of time, and if you have low water pressure, then you're not getting enough water into the icemaker mold during that pre-designated amount of time. If that water supply to your home is restricted or basically wherever the water is, the pipe is mounted downstairs or behind the sink or wherever it's at, if the shutoff valve is restricted you can get that situation. Or, if you've got a [filter](#) and you haven't changed it, it will cause it as well to restrict the water flow to the [icemaker](#). So I'd start with the easy one, which is the water filter. And if that doesn't solve the problem I would look at the water supply going to the refrigerator itself. If that is strong, you've got good water pressure to the [water valve](#) where it hooks up to the back of the [refrigerator](#), and then I would suspect the water valve itself has failed. But I'd start with the filter; a lot of people forget to change those things and they normally require replacement every six months to a year. A lot of newer machines have a light that comes on or after so much time with the water valve being actuated it will just shut off and say, "Time to change your filter".

SUSAN

No, this filter is inside the [refrigerator](#) and you have to hold the refrigerator door open and push a button to get cold water. They don't use that because it takes too long to fill a glass.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right.

SUSAN

But it still has to be changed?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah. Is the [filter](#) part of the refrigerator itself?

SUSAN

Well it came with the refrigerator, yeah.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok. So it's part of the internal workings of the refrigerator?

SUSAN

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok, then I would start there. One, if you can't remember the last time you changed it, then it might not be a bad idea to do it anyway. If it doesn't solve your problem then I would start looking at the water supply to the refrigerator, or if that's okay then I would suspect the water valve itself.

SUSAN

[Where is the water valve located?](#)

JOHN SOWDEN

Most of them are located in the rear of the unit, so you will have to slide it out and remove the lower back cover, which is normally just a series of screws around the back.

SUSAN

Ok. I will talk to my husband about it; he helped install the copper tubing to the basement. So I will share this information, thank you for your help.

### **Amana Refrigerator with Freezer on Bottom with Non-Working Light Bulbs**

JOHN SOWDEN

Here's another question on a refrigerator, from Harold in Richmond, here on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead please, Harold.

HAROLD

Yes, I have an [Amana refrigerator](#) with a freezer on the bottom. The light in the refrigerator doesn't work. We changed the bulbs, and when it initially happened there was a blue spark. Now the light on the freezer on the bottom works.

JOHN SOWDEN

The refrigerator light doesn't work, and you say you have changed the bulb?

HAROLD

We have changed both [bulbs](#), yes. It was a blue spark when we initially opened the door.

JOHN SOWDEN

A blue spark coming from the socket?

HAROLD

It seemed to be coming from that light area, yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok. And now you cannot get it to turn on?

HAROLD

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, the wiring circuit for this is normally pretty straightforward. There's either a bad switch, the [door switch](#) when you open and close the door; it all depends on how the unit's wired. Sometimes they'll have a separate switch for the [freezer](#) and one for the refrigerator, so it's possible that one would work without the other. And the other problem you run into is just the sockets themselves over a period of time get a little corroded, and what happens is even though you put a new [light bulb](#) in, it might not be seated in the socket all the way. And what you can do is unscrew the light bulb and put a very, very thin layer of Vaseline or something of that nature, not WD 40 but Vaseline does work okay. And a real thin film of it on the threads and then see if you can screw it down in there a little tighter so you're actually making the bottom of that socket. If that doesn't help it out then its possible the socket itself is just burned out, that it's just overheated.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Now, are you talking about the threads of the bulb?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Okay, not sticking your finger in that socket?

JOHN SOWDEN

No, no, don't stick your finger in the socket! That's not a good thing. I'm glad you pointed that out, though. Yeah, just lightly lubricate the light bulb and see if you can get it to seat better. You'll find at times, you might think when you screwed it in that you got it in all the way, and you didn't. You can take a flashlight and, as John pointed out, you want to unplug the unit, look inside the socket. You might see some corrosion, or at the bottom at the base where the light bulb meets it, it could be burnt. If that's the case then you just replace the socket.

HAROLD

But it has two [light bulbs](#) and it would be unusual for both of them not to work at the same time, unless the switch went out, wouldn't you think?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah. I'm not looking at the unit and I don't have a model, so I'm just going on the most standard, which is one bulb in the freezer, one bulb in the [refrigerator](#). If you've got the

dual bulbs off each side, then it's either the socket has failed and they're both not lighting, or as you pointed out the switch has failed. And to get the switch out, the best thing to do is to take your [model number](#) off the unit, go to our website and put it in, and you can see a picture of what the new switch looks like. Then, to get those out, you normally want to pop them out with a putty knife, and you might want to take a piece of black tape and put it over the edge of the knife so you don't scratch the plastic. By looking at the new [switch](#) you can see which side of the switch you want to push in and depress the locking tab on. So a little bit of homework ahead of time will help you pop out that switch without tearing up the breaker panel or the framing around the perimeter of the door assembly.

HAROLD

Ok. Thank you.

### **1985 Kenmore Side by Side Refrigerator with Icemaker Making Chirping Sounds**

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And here with a question on a [Kenmore refrigerator](#) making a bird noise, Don in Gibraltar, on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead, Don.

DON

Good morning, sir. Yes, this Kenmore is over twenty years old, and it had an icemaker put in ten years ago. That bird sound can be anywhere from a minute each to maybe once an hour, and it's very consistent. Now the thing I notice is there seems to be a fan running and when this bird noise comes on the fan seems to slow down or hesitate a little bit.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes. From what you're describing, the most common thing found is the [fan motor](#) bearing, the freezer fan I think is what you're describing, right, inside the freezer section?

DON

Yes, it's inside the freezer section.

JOHN SOWDEN

Because there's normally a fan motor on the back of the unit as well, the [condenser fan motor](#). Most often the [chirping sound](#) is the bearings in the freezer fan are worn and failing and you should just replace the fan motor. I've had people try to take them apart and lubricate them and all that good stuff but it's normally a short-lived repair. So, if the fan motor is chirping, then I'd just replace the [freezer fan motor](#). I'd do that because, if you don't, eventually what's going to happen is its going to lock up and not turn and then you'll lose all the food in your refrigerator. So, it's nice that those, as they wear out, will give you a little hint that there's something wrong by the noise, and you can get to it before you start losing food.

DON

But I don't see any easy access to that fan!

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, in order to get at the fan you have to remove the shelving in the freezer; then you have to remove the back panel of the freezer, and there's normally a series of screws around the perimeter of the panel.

DON

From the back side?

JOHN SOWDEN

From the interior. And this is a [side by side](#)?

DON

It's a side by side.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, and unfortunately, the problem with working on the inside of the freezers on the side by sides, I have found, is that you've got about a foot to fifteen inch wide space and you can't get in there and face it squarely; you have to kind of turn yourself and sneak in there. It's not a lot of fun to get in there versus a [refrigerator](#) section where you can put your whole body in there facing. With the freezer you kind of have to turn to one side and stick your hand in there and take the screws out. You have to remove the back panel after you remove the shelving, and you can then see the freezer fan motor. There are just a few screws that retain it and three wires, normally, to the hot, the neutral, and then a ground wire.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And if you go to [repairclinic.com](#) and type your model number in...

JOHN SOWDEN

You'll see a picture of the fan motor.

DON

I don't have access to the Internet.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, you can still give us a call, and that's 888-34-Fixit. They can help you out on availability which most of these are readily available. So if you want to stop into our Canton, Michigan parts counter or you can always have it shipped to your door.

DON

Thank you.

## **1999 Kenmore Top Mount Refrigerator Dripping Water from the Inside of the Refrigerator**

JOHN MCCULLOCH

We'll go to a question on another [Kenmore refrigerator](#) from Joyce in Sterling Heights. Go ahead please, Joyce.

JOYCE

Hi you guys. We have a question about our 1999 Kenmore refrigerator. There is [water that drips slowly down the back of the inside of the refrigerator](#). We're getting about a cup of water in the bottom of the refrigerator underneath the fruit and vegetable bin, and we're wondering...I went on the website and I've read, and it sounds like maybe we have a problem with a clogged tube?

JOHN SOWDEN

That is correct!

JOYCE

OK. And my husband was wondering how does he access that tube? It looks like the back of the refrigerator is totally sealed except for the bottom along the coils, so would he have to take off something inside the freezer?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes. You go through the inside of the unit. This I'm assuming is a [freezer on top](#)?

JOYCE

It is.

JOHN SOWDEN

OK. Yeah, what happens is there's normally cooling coils mounted to the back wall, and some are mounted in the space between the refrigerator and freezer section. There's a [drain trough](#) that the water, after it defrosts, the water drains through this trough and it's supposed to drain into this tube and run into the underside of this refrigerator into this little pan where it evaporates into the room.

JOYCE

Right, and when I pull it up it's totally dry.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right, and that's not uncommon, because first of all there's not a lot of water that comes through, especially in the winter months when it's normally drier in your house anyway. So that's not always a tell-tale sign. The only time you're going to find any amount of water in there is after a defrost cycle. You have to catch it at the right time, and normally it defrosts about three times a day is the average. But yeah, to access it you normally have to remove the back wall. At times you have to remove the divider, which is the part between the refrigerator and freezer section. A lot of it depends on what style of

refrigerator you have. Being a Kenmore it could be one of several other major manufacturers. They generally don't manufacture their own products as much as they'll have Whirlpool or [Frigidaire](#) or whatever make a few hundred thousand units for them and put the Kenmore name on it. Yours is probably a [Whirlpool](#).

JOYCE

I got out the packing slip and it does say Whirlpool. So when you look inside the [freezer](#), there's a large vent that runs down the center inside. That's not going to be a problem for him to take apart?

JOHN SOWDEN

You have to look at it. Sometimes there's a screw that retains that, and they like to hide them. A lot of times it will snap off. And the other thing to do is while you have that model in there, if you put the model number in our site, and you can look at all these pieces that make up the [air duct assembly](#) and it gives you an idea of where to access them, where the locking tabs are at if you have to unsnap things. It makes it easier to disassemble if you can see what it looks like first.

JOYCE

Would that be under the part section?

JOHN SOWDEN

If you put the model number off your unit into the website, you'll find a list of all the common failing parts for your unit.

JOYCE

Thank you so much. It's a big help!

### **1998 GE Oven Not Self-Cleaning**

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And we'll start things off this hour with a question on a [GE oven](#), from Annette in Royal Oak, on the Appliance Repair Show. Good morning, Annette. Go ahead, please.

ANNETTE

I have this GE oven, and I'm not sure how old it is, we think it's about ten years old.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay.

ANNETTE

And it always worked fine, but then all of a sudden the [self-cleaning part just stopped](#) working.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. Does this have a [digital control](#) on it?

ANNETTE

No, it's just the [knobs](#).

JOHN SOWDEN

The knobs? Okay. In the home you're in, is this an existing appliance?

ANNETTE

No. I bought it a while back, but I don't have the book anymore.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. The model you provided, I don't recognize it. It doesn't come up on the website so I don't know if it's a number transposed or if it's just an old unit. That's why I was asking, but it's OK. You've got a double oven, or a single?

ANNETTE

It's a single.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. It just quit self-cleaning?

ANNETTE

Right. Everything else works fine.

JOHN SOWDEN

So it bakes, it broils, and it's just the self-clean feature that's failed. And you have to set your clock for a start and a stop time?

ANNETTE

Correct.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. Basically what you do with a self-cleaning oven is you turn on the [bake and broil elements](#). Each unit's different, but basically you heat your oven up to between 800 and 1000 degrees and you just burn everything off the interior wall. Does this have a shield on the oven door that you have to lift up in order to get it to clean?

ANNETTE

No, it has a lock. You push the lever to the side and that locks it.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right, and you hear a click, do you have to press a button and just slide it over?

ANNETTE

Nope. Just move it over.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay.

ANNETTE

And the oven “on” light lights and the oven cycle lights, but the cleaning one does not. It gets warm, but [it doesn't get hot](#).

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, it sounds like you're getting part of the circuit, but you're losing the circuit somewhere in there. In self-clean there's several components that come into play that do not come into play with the bake and broil, which is normally the [door switch assembly](#) that has to sense that the oven door is closed, and then the latch assembly. Normally there are two or three switches that have to be made. There's also (it depends on the unit) a [lock solenoid](#) in there that literally opens up when you slide the latch across, so then when it goes into the self-clean, it cuts power from the latch assembly so you cannot open the oven door while it's hot. Most units have some sort of a fail-safe for that.

ANNETTE

Right, it does do that; like right now I can latch it and unlatch it as much as I want. When it's working, you can't open it. So it does do that.

JOHN SOWDEN

They lock out, right. You have obviously an electrical problem in the unit, because the [bake and broil elements](#) both heat. The easy stuff is not happening; you've got a problem that's in the circuitry somewhere. The components that could have failed are the oven door switch, the lock assembly, a lock switch, or the [clock](#) itself—the contacts in the clock might be burned and causing that. The only way for you to diagnose that is to use the wiring diagram on the unit, which normally you have to slide it out in order to access, and then use a meter to trace down the failed circuit. Normally that is something that you want to call for service on.

ANNETTE

Oh, okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

Because it all depends, some are pretty complicated. I've seen everything from a loose wire to a small switch burned or a broken wire somewhere because of the heat. There are several things it can be, and you can replace a lot of components guessing and still not get it.

ANNETTE

Okay, so I'd be better off just calling somebody.

JOHN SOWDEN

Call somebody out and obviously being a [wall oven](#), you have to wrestle those things out of the cabinet to work on them, and that's not much fun. A lot of service companies these

days have what they call an oven cart, which is something you can roll right up to the unit and adjust it so it sits underneath it, and as you roll it out it supports the whole oven. Makes life a lot easier.

ANNETTE

Okay, thank you very much.

JOHN SOWDEN

I'm sorry I couldn't give you the magic bullet scenario where you can just replace something and then it will work again.

ANNETTE

Well, at least I know what to do.

### **2001 Kenmore Gas Dryer Not Heating**

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And let's go now to Lou in Taylor with a question on a [Kenmore dryer](#) that isn't heating, on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead please, Lou.

LOU

Yes, I've got an approximately seven year old Kenmore dryer, and I've noticed that recently it has been [taking longer to dry clothes](#). Yesterday it stopped drying completely. It does work as far as the drum turning, but there's [no heat](#) coming from the dryer itself.

JOHN SOWDEN

Is it gas or electric?

LOU

It's gas.

JOHN SOWDEN

It's gas, and so it tumbles and doesn't heat.

LOU

Right.

JOHN SOWDEN

The most common thing that causes this is something in the gas ignition system. There are three components in there, which is the [igniter](#), what they call the light sensor, or heat sensor, and the [coils on the gas valve](#). It depends on the unit itself: some have a small plug, and on the newer units that you can pop out and look inside the dryer while its running and make a visual inspection of what's happening.

LOU

I did that already. The bottom drawer I opened up.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. Does the igniter glow?

LOU

I don't see any kind of glowing. Would the igniter be inside the chamber where the flame is?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes. Normally you'll see the [igniter](#) will glow bright orange and then you'll hear a click which is the light sensor actuating and then the [gas valve](#) will open up. If you're not getting any glow then you either have an open or broken igniter, or it's possible that you're not getting any power to the gas valve, which means one of the [thermostats](#) that senses heat in the drum has failed and is stuck in the open position.

LOU

Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

So the easy way to check that is, where the plug that plugs into the gas valve, if you have a volt [ohmmeter](#) you can see if you have current there. You can cut the system in half, basically and say, I've got current to the gas valve so I know that my problem lies in the heat generating components, the igniter and the heat sensors. If not, then you have to start back-tracking to find out where you're losing that circuit.

LOU

Okay. All right.

JOHN SOWDEN

Most often it's a bad igniter.

### **1999 Maytag Refrigerator/Freezer Icemaker is Producing Hollow Ice Cubes**

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And here with a question on a...let's see, a [Maytag freezer](#). We'll go to Denise in Toledo, Ohio on the Appliance Repair Show. Good morning, Denise. Go ahead, please.

DENISE

Good morning. We have a [Maytag refrigerator](#), and the problem that we're having is that our automatic icemaker is making [hollow ice cubes](#).

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. Is this something that just started happening?

DENISE

I would say it's been going on a month or two.

JOHN SOWDEN

And how old is the machine?

DENISE

Roughly nine years.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay and this is the first problem you've had?

DENISE

Yes it is.

JOHN SOWDEN

Does this unit have a [water filter](#)?

DENISE

I don't believe so.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok, so it's just hooked up to your household plumbing?

DENISE

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

The most common reason that you have [hollow ice cubes](#) is a lack of water. Most ice makers will fill, and on this particular unit, for around seven seconds. So what happens is once the icemaker senses it's time to dump the ice, it dumps the ice out and then it sends a signal, a voltage to the water inlet valve and says I need water for seven seconds. If your water pressure in your house is low; if the shutoff valve where you have the tubing mounted to your pipes, either downstairs or under the sink or wherever it may be is restricted, you're not going to get the amount of water into the [icemaker mold](#) that is required, and you're going to get hollow cubes or half the amount of cubes that is required. If all that is in good shape, you're getting water pressure to the icemaker water inlet valve, then I would suspect the [water inlet valve](#) itself has failed, or is restricted. Do you have hard water?

DENISE

We live in the city.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, most wells that don't have filtered or softened water run into more problems with the restricted plumbing, but it can happen anywhere, especially if you have what they call the self-piercing saddle valve on the pipe or wherever you have it mounted to get water to your [refrigerator](#). It pokes a small hole in the copper pipe and then allows that water to

get to your ice maker valve; over a period of time, that small hole, which is normally about the size of a pencil lead, will restrict; it doesn't take a lot of sediment or anything like that to plug that up, and that's where you're going to start getting low water pressure. So I'd start there. If all that's good, if you take the hose off to the [water valve](#) and put it in a bucket and turn it back on and you've got really good water pressure, then I'd replace the water inlet valve for the refrigerator.

DENISE

Oh, thank you so much. That sounds great; you've showed us the right places to look. I really appreciate your time.

### **GE Range Surface Burners Not Heating Properly**

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And let's go to a question on a [GE range](#) not heating properly. Jane in Bryan, Ohio on the Appliance Repair Show. Good morning, Jane, go ahead please.

JANE

Well, I have an older GE stove. The oven works wonderfully, it's a self-clean. But the coils, which we have replaced, the sockets that you plug them into have been replaced; but I still don't get good contact with them.

JOHN SOWDEN

Now you're talking about the [surface units](#) that you're having problems with?

JANE

Right.

JOHN SOWDEN

And you're saying that the elements are not always working properly? Do you have to jiggle them around to get them to work?

JANE

I have to push them in at the right angle, evidently, to get...but they will come on, so I know the burners are working. It's the contact that evidently in the stove there...

JOHN SOWDEN

Now you've said that the [receptacles](#), the things that the burners plug into, you've had those replaced? And how long ago was that?

JANE

Oh, a year.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok. And did you replace the burners when you replaced the receptacles?

JANE  
No.

JOHN SOWDEN  
Did you look at the burners and see if there's any burned or pit marks on them?

JANE  
There are pit marks.

JOHN SOWDEN  
Yeah. See, what happens is you almost need to replace those together.

JANE  
Oh, I see.

JOHN SOWDEN  
If you take a burner that's got a lot of burn spots and pits on it, and you replace just the [receptacle](#), then when you plug it back in you still have a bad connection because the burner is basically starting to be compromised. Then over time you start to wear out the receptacle. What you can do is unplug the [burners](#) and take some emery cloth or some fine sandpaper and try to sand off all those burn marks on the contacts where they plug into the receptacle and that might get you some more mileage out of your current configuration. But if it continues, then I would recommend replacing the receptacles and the burners at the same time.

JANE  
And the burners. Ok, that's very clear. Thank you very much.

### **1998 Frigidaire Icemaker with Frozen Water Tube**

JOHN MCCULLOCH  
We'll go to a ten year old [Frigidaire refrigerator](#) question from Harold in Akron, Ohio on the Appliance Repair Show. Good morning, Harold, go ahead please.

HAROLD  
Yes sir. I've got a freezer that's the [ice maker](#) suddenly stopped working. And on examination I found that the tube going in from the back to the [icemaker was frozen up](#).

JOHN SOWDEN  
Ok.

HAROLD  
I found that by pulling the line off and forcing it through a cycle and water coming out ...

JOHN SOWDEN  
Of the back of the refrigerator.

HAROLD

Uh-huh. I defrosted that side by taking all of the food out and bringing it back to temperature. Then put it all back and it worked fine, it worked about two works and then it suddenly stopped again.

JOHN SOWDEN

That's about right!

HAROLD

So what's causing it to freeze up in there?

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, the reason it's freezing up is that the water isn't coming out with enough force down that tube, and that's either caused by low water pressure in the home, which we've talked about in a few calls here today. Or the [valve](#) itself is not seating one hundred percent when it shuts off. And so what happens is, the water runs down that tube, but it's not a one long shot of water. It kind of trickles in, and then it leaves several drops in that tube, and then it freezes, and it cycles again, and it freezes a little more. So after about two weeks, like you described, it's kind of like rings on a tree, it just keeps building and building and building until you freeze over the water tube and then the water has to go somewhere. It normally [squirts all over the back of your refrigerator](#).

HAROLD

Ok, that sounds like maybe I should start with the [filter](#).

JOHN SOWDEN

I'd start there, but I'd also make sure you're getting good pressure to the icemaker water inlet valve. If you're not, then find out why not; normally it's the shutoff valve mounted on the plumbing in your home. If that's okay, then the valve itself is either restricted, with hard water debris or sediment, or it's just failed and the diaphragm inside the valve is not seating properly. So it's a water supply problem, and it's normally either the [water valve](#) or the water supply to it. Being ten years old, I'd probably just replace the valve, make sure you have good water pressure to it, and change the filter. Just start over and then maybe you won't have to keep doing this every two weeks.

HAROLD

That'll take care of it. I didn't think about the fact that water pressure problems could cause it to freeze up. It does, and the valve needs to seat properly; it needs about eighteen PSI or back pressure behind it to actually push down on that diaphragm properly and seat it. So the low water pressure can cause the valve to not act properly, too.

HAROLD

Yes. Well thank you very much.

## 1998 Kenmore Washing Machine Leaking Oil

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And we'll go now to a question on a [Kenmore washer](#) leaking oil from Ray in Howell on the Appliance Repair Show.

RAY

Yeah, I have a Kenmore washer that's probably about eight years old, I would guess, maybe ten. And I get grease, not oil, in the tub itself after I wash with it. It accumulates in the back of the [agitator](#), on the bottom. And at the water line, on the tub itself, the tub. And I clean it out completely about three weeks ago, took the agitator out and took all of it out, and I noticed now as I ran the washer a couple more times, it's back in there. So it must be coming from the washer somewhere.

JOHN SOWDEN

Your oil is internal and not dripping on the floor?

RAY

That's correct. In fact, it's like a Vaseline consistency; it's more of grease than oil.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right. More than likely it's coming from the [transmission](#).

RAY

OK.

JOHN SOWDEN

On that unit they've got what they call the [basket drive assembly](#), and the transmission shaft slides up through there. Its possible those seals on the top of the basket drive have failed, and it's coming up, or the oil could be coming up through the transmission itself. I would slide the transmission out and look at that top seal on the basket drive and see where it's leaking.

RAY

It's a significant quantity, I've probably originally taken off the equivalent of four or five teaspoons of grease, and now I notice there's probably another two or three in there.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, that's quite a bit. Normally the basket drive assembly is just a set of bearings and the transmission shaft slides up inside that. Have you looked underneath the unit to see if there's any oil dripping?

RAY

No, I haven't.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, you might find that it's coming out both sides that it's [leaking on the floor](#).

RAY

So you're saying there's a transmission down there?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, and basically you need to completely tear it apart to change it out. We have a lot of people who do it successfully; buying the [manual](#) is probably not a bad idea. It's not a super hard thing to do, you just need to take your time and follow the steps.

RAY

Are there seals in there? Is that what I need to do is replace the seals?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, there's a top...well, you're probably better off just replacing the transmission completely, just slide a new one in there. And also, when you get a new transmission, make sure you read the instructions because they have what they call a weep hole—on most of them on top of the transmission—that is sealed for shipping. And then when you put the transmission in you want to take the cover off of that, so you're not sealing up the [gearcase assembly](#). What happens if you don't take the weep hole cover off is you get a pressure buildup in side the gearcase and you'll start blowing oil past the seals again.

RAY

Do I access this transmission from the bottom of the unit? Could I open the side and get to it that way?

JOHN SOWDEN

No, the best thing to do on this is to remove the cabinet of the [washing machine](#), and then you can tilt the washer back and slide the transmission out.

RAY

Understood.

JOHN SOWDEN

If you go to our website, [repairclinic.com](#), there are instructions on how to get the cover off and, again, as far as replacing a transmission and all that stuff goes, I'd look at buying the [manual](#). I think it is fifteen or twenty bucks, and it saves you time versus labor so it's a pretty good investment.

RAY

Ok. Thank you very much.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And these the manuals are not the ones that come with the appliance?

JOHN SOWDEN

It all depends. Some manufacturers have a general repair manual, but I'm talking about one specific to that unit. And some are made for that model number, we have a lot of manuals you can order that are just for your model or that production run, which gets into all the wiring diagrams and all that stuff. So there are different levels, but the one for the [washing machine](#) that he has covers a lot of the basic stuff, including how to tear it apart and put it back together again. This is a basic machine, so it's pretty user-serviceable.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

That sounds good. I didn't realize there were two manuals. I learned something today.

JOHN SOWDEN

Sometimes there's no manual. It depends on the manufacturer.

### **2008 Electric Slide-In Oven Not Heating Properly**

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Let's go to a question from a man, who's gone through three ovens, it looks like.

JOHN SOWDEN

That sounds interesting.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

John in Berkeley, on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead, John.

JOHN

Yeah, hi, I've got a [problem with uneven heating](#) in an oven that's less than a year old. And we've now been through three ovens in about twelve years. My wife doesn't really cook that much, but when she does she wants the stuff to at least cook properly.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok.

JOHN

I recently adjusted the calibration on it using both a digital and a regular gauge, just to verify the problem.

JOHN SOWDEN

When you say you adjusted it, is this through the [circuit board](#), or does this have standard [thermostat](#) controls, like a dial?

JOHN

No, through the circuit board there are instructions on the...

JOHN SOWDEN

Right, you can go in and add five degrees, plus or minus.

JOHN

Yeah, basically I bumped it up about ten degrees because that seemed to be about the problem at the 350 degree setting. I don't know how it's going to behave any higher than that.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, that's where most baking is done.

JOHN

I guess my wife's question is, since I replaced the circuit breaker in the basement, just to make sure that the breaker wasn't worn out, should the line be replaced as well?

JOHN SOWDEN

The line going from where?

JOHN

From the circuit breaker to the oven.

JOHN SOWDEN

That's something that's not commonly done unless it's really old wiring or undersized wiring. When you say [it's not baking evenly](#), at 350 degrees and you said you used a digital meter to get—

JOHN

Yeah, I used both a digital and a regular gauge and put them in there side by side and verified that I was having a problem.

JOHN SOWDEN

Is this gas or electric?

JOHN

Electric.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok, and you set it at 350 degrees, and what were you getting for readings?

JOHN

It would float somewhere between 325 and 330 degrees.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right, well generally the first thing you want to do in checking this is you want to pre-heat the oven. Normally what I do is throw the first three observations away...

JOHN

I have followed the instructions that said to wait for the first five cycles before taking the temperature.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right. For 350, ideally, it would come out at roughly 325 degrees and cycle off at 375 degrees so that your average temperature is 350 degrees. If it's still low...but that's what you're looking for is average temperature. So throw away the first, you know I'd start at least three or four cycles and then start monitoring it and see what the temperature swing is and it should be pretty consistent. But at 350, again around 325-330 degrees, it should come on and you should start to see the temperature increase and it should go beyond 350 to 375-380 degrees. I would take and log four or five of those cycles and average them out. And then if your temperature is five or ten degrees low then I would add the additional calibration to it.

JOHN

Yeah, this wasn't even getting past 350 at any one point.

JOHN SOWDEN

Ok. Sounds pretty low. This has an [oven sensor](#) in it, so it's possible that the resistance in that is not good, so you might want to try another oven sensor and see if that helps. If you calibrate it as much as the board will let you, and it depends on the unit, most of them will only let you go twenty or thirty degrees.

JOHN

It's plus or minus thirty five degrees.

JOHN SOWDEN

OK. And if you can't get that out of it I'd try another sensor. [Bake ability problems](#) sometimes can be the worst things to diagnose. One old rule of thumb I used to use is basically heat the oven up for forty-five minutes, take a cake, a box cake, follow instructions exactly as it says, and see how it turns out. Normally if it turns out okay, the oven is at least working up to par. But as far as replacing the wiring and stuff to it, unless you have a problem with the structure of the wiring or the age or whatever, it shouldn't have an impact on the baking inside the oven.

JOHN

Yeah, but wiring...my biggest question at the time was the circuit breaker. I checked that, I inspected the wiring; I inspected the outlet box, tightened all the wires on the back of the stove and made sure they were all tight.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

You said it was under a year old?

JOHN

Yeah, it's just under a year old. I'm getting ready to call the store and have them send somebody out.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, obviously if it's under warranty and it sounds like you've done a lot of homework, you might want to let them know, "Here's what I have, here's what I've done," so that at least the repairman to save you some time can hopefully bring out a new [sensor](#) or a new board or both and see if they can get that tightened up for you.

JOHN

Yeah, my wife's biggest concern was that we threw out a very expensive oven a little over a year ago because we were having the same problem and the cost of the repairs on that particular oven were so outrageous that we thought, six years old, we'll just get a new one.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, at times when it comes to circuit boards and things of that nature...is this a [wall oven](#) or is it a [free-standing stove](#)?

JOHN SOWDEN

It's a slide-in.

JOHN

Oh, ok. All right, like I say you've got a warranty and I'd use it.

### **2006 Kenmore Dishwasher Leaving a Residue on the Dishes**

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And here's a question on a three-year-old [Kenmore dishwasher](#) from Joe in Grosse Ile on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead please, Joe.

JOE

Hi. The problem with the dishwasher is that [it's leaving a residue](#) that looks like food particles and also down in the bottom of the dishwasher.

JOHN SOWDEN

OK.

JOE

And I've tried to lift off the thing that sprays the water around, but it doesn't come off?

JOHN SOWDEN

Right. [The wash arms](#)?

JOE

It comes up a little bit and then locks. Water is going through but I don't know why all of this residue is being left on the dishes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Normally it's because [the unit's not draining properly](#), and the drain water doesn't have anywhere to go. A lot of the newer machines have got strainers and things of that nature where it's possible that if you've put something in there that's got a lot of debris on it that could have plugged up the strainer and you might have to clean that off as well.

JOE

That's what I thought, but you have to take the spinner off that spins the water, and I don't know how to get that off.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right. Actually being a Kenmore, it could be one of several different manufacturers. If you put the [model number](#) as it reads off the unit in to our website, [repairclinic.com](#), you'll see a picture of all the common parts for that and it might help you determine the [wash arm support](#). There are several different configurations that it could possibly be.

JOE

Oh, I see.

JOHN SOWDEN

The first thing I would do before you start tearing into it is just make sure the drain is clear. Is this the drain to your disposal?

JOE

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Make sure it's clear, that the water is able to drain into the disposal. Take the boot off where it mounts to the disposal and make sure that's not plugged up. Because a lot of times, especially during the holidays, people really put those through the ringer and it's possible you've used the disposal a lot and plugged up that port that allows the dishwasher to drain.

JOE

This has been going on a long time before the holidays. But I'll look into that. Can you help me with one more question that I forgot to mention?

JOHN SOWDEN

Sure.

### **Icemaker Not Working**

JOE

My daughter just moved into a condo and her [icemaker doesn't work](#).

JOHN SOWDEN

All right.

JOE

Now, I've turned the valve on underneath the sink, where the water supply had been turned off. But nothing happened. And I don't know how to manually jiggle the valve, or I don't know what the problem is.

JOHN SOWDEN

OK, the [icemaker](#) worked previously, or you don't know?

JOE

I don't know. She just moved into this condo.

JOHN SOWDEN

Just moved in, you turn the water on to the icemaker, and nothing happens?

JOE

I turned it on where the supply comes in under the sink.

JOHN SOWDEN

Inside the freezer section, the icemaker itself normally has a shutoff arm on it; if it's lifted in the up position, it could be just that the icemaker is turned off.

JOE

Ah ha!

JOHN SOWDEN

I would look inside and just make sure the arm has been lowered. If that's the case and it's still [not making ice](#), you have one of several different scenarios it could be. It could be the icemaker itself, or it could be the water supply, the [icemaker valve](#) as you alluded to. If you go to our website and go to the [Contact Us](#) section, enter your email address, answer some questions about the unit as far as the type of appliance, model, age, you'll get to a library of help that we have a series of documents to help walk you through some of the diagnostic procedures, including how to test cycle an icemaker and everything else.

JOE

Oh, good!

JOHN SOWDEN

Which might help you out, and this is something that you can access at your leisure and print out to take over to be the hero and fix the daughter's icemaker.

JOE

Ok. Thanks a lot.

**Commercial Upright Freezer Switch**

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And our next question is on a [Gibson freezer](#) from Verne in Garden City on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead please, Verne.

VERNE

Yes, good morning! I have a kitchen commercial freezer, an [upright model](#). And on the lower right hand corner there's an [on/off switch](#). It seems to operate fine, but the switch is in the off position. What does that switch do for me?

JOHN SOWDEN

This is a commercial unit, or a domestic freezer, do you know?

VERNE

No, it's a commercial unit.

JOHN SOWDEN

And you say that the lower right hand switch, you have it off but the unit's working fine?

VERNE

That's correct.

JOHN SOWDEN

All right. To tell you exactly what that switch does, I'd have to see the wiring diagram for the unit, but it might be just for a set of [frame heaters](#) or something to do with the defrost cycle itself. A lot of times they'll have frame heaters on the commercial units, and that switch might turn on and off. Normally if it's a main power switch and it's in the off position, then unless the switch has failed, your freezer wouldn't be working. So that switch would I assume control something else that's an option for that freezer. Normally the wiring diagram on that—this has got the [compressor](#) on top?

VERNE

I believe the compressor is at the bottom.

JOHN SOWDEN

It's at the bottom, but it is a commercial unit?

VERNE

Yes, it is. It says Jefferson commercial.

JOHN SOWDEN

Hmm. OK. Because most of the time on the [Kelvinator's](#) and the [Gibson's](#), the older ones, they've got all that stuff located up top. But yeah, I would have to look at the print, the wiring diagram, to see what that switch controls. I guess it's possible it's a main on/off switch, but again, if it was in the off position then it wouldn't do anything. You've got to look at the wiring diagram and find that switch and see what components are wired in the circuit with that to figure it out.

VERNE  
OK.

JOHN SOWDEN  
I'd have to be there for this one.

### **1998 GE Refrigerator/Freezer Not Freezing**

JOHN MCCULLOCH  
A ten year old [GE refrigerator](#) that's not freezing with Tim in Berkeley on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead please, Tim!

TIM  
Hi. It's a GE, and the refrigerator part is working fine; it's set on I believe five or six. The freezer part was set on six, and we noticed that we had some sorbet in there and it was real soft. And so I have a thermometer up in there, so I turned it up a bit and it was up to about twenty degrees, and I turned it up a bit and it didn't do too much. Now I've got it set it all the way to nine and it only gets down to about ten degrees. So everything else is staying frozen, you know fish and chicken and all that kind of stuff. But the sorbet is still soft, the ice cream is soft, and the freezer is quite full. It hasn't really changed much in the last month. Everything's been fine, but...

JOHN SOWDEN  
Now you say that nothing's changed as far as the same amount of food in it all that stuff. Is the freezer fan running, can you hear the freezer fan running?

TIM  
Yeah, while I was waiting I unplugged it and left the door open a few minutes. And then I felt I hadn't heard it lately.

JOHN SOWDEN  
Is it making any [unusual noises](#)?

TIM  
No.

JOHN SOWDEN  
But it is running?

TIM  
Yeah, it's running.

JOHN SOWDEN  
When's the last time you cleaned the condenser on the unit?

TIM

Probably within the last six months or so.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, that's pretty good. And that's clean; the fan that cools the condenser is turning as well?

TIM

Where is that at, underneath?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes. Because that fan stalling or a dirty condenser can gauge it to run quite a bit and [not be able to get that freezer temperature down](#) to what it should be, which is zero to eight degrees, especially if you have it turned all the way up.

TIM

I would suspect that. And even if you've just cleaned the condenser, a lot of times you can have things in the room, especially around the holidays with all the peanuts and packing material that comes in, can plug up and stop that [fan blade](#). So that would be the first place that I would look, and see if the fan's turning and if the condenser's clean.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And if that doesn't work you can call us next week on the Appliance Repair Show.