

Appliance Repair Show Transcript—February 17, 2008

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Maytag Over-the-Range Microwave Making Noises and Arcing

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And we'll start things off this morning with a question from Paul, in Brighton, here on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead please, Paul.

PAUL

I have a Maytag under the shelf [microwave](#).

JOHN SOWDEN

[Over the range](#) is the proper terminology.

PAUL

Oh, you're right. Okay. And I turned it on the other day, and I here this sharp, really nasty noise coming from it, and I look...

JOHN SOWDEN

And [you've got lighting inside your microwave?](#)

PAUL

Right! And it looks like it's coming through one of the [clips](#) that hold the [shelf](#).

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes. One of the first things you need to do is make sure that what they call the [wave guide cover](#), the small, sometimes they look like cardboard or other times it's a plastic cover—

PAUL

Is that inside?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes.

PAUL

Between the panels?

JOHN SOWDEN

It's going to be in the oven cavity, if you look inside you're going to either have a three inch by three inch square cover, that's where the microwaves come out of the cavity. The [wave guide](#), as they call it. Others will have another [plastic cover](#) on the ceiling and they have a small, what they call an antenna that stirs the microwaves so that they bounce around the cavity with more uniformity for cooking. The arcing that you're getting is probably from...you can get a grease buildup where you're actually cooking that spot in the cavity as you're using it. More than likely if you pull that little clip out that holds, it's supposed to be for the [metal shelf](#), is that the one you're talking about?

PAUL

Yes, right.

JOHN SOWDEN

It's probably been arcing to metal there.

PAUL

It looked like it arced to the [shelf](#), because the shelf was burnt and that [clip](#) is just burned up.

JOHN SOWDEN

If that shelf has burn marks or has been compromised then you need a new shelf.

PAUL

Oh, really?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, I wouldn't put it back in. It's coded to stop that situation, but if it does burn through, [microwaves](#) are going to go right to that bare metal spot. If you look at where the clip is snapped into the oven cavity, if you have any burn marks around there, you need to take some sand paper, some fine grit, and take it back down to the metal, and then you can get [oven cavity paint](#). We have it on our website, which is www.RepairClinic.com, and we have it in [spray form](#) (part # 261900) or in the nail polish bottle style, and you just clean it up a bit and recoat it so that you don't have any bare metal showing and put in a new [metal clip](#). You should be all right then, but as far as using that [rack](#), if you have any burn marks or whatever on it I wouldn't...

PAUL

Well, it seemed like they cleaned off.

JOHN SOWDEN

I would monitor it, but if it starts arcing again I would buy a new rack or just forego using the rack.

PAUL

Do you carry the [rack](#)?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah.

PAUL

Do you carry the [clip](#)?

JOHN SOWDEN

We should have all that stuff. If you put your [model number](#) into the “[Part Detective](#),” you’ll see all the common parts for your unit, and if for some reason you don’t you can always give us a call and our people there can research that for you.

PAUL

Are you open today?

JOHN SOWDEN

You know, I just got here and I didn’t have a chance to call the office to see if we’re open. Normally, it takes a pretty bad day to prevent us from opening, but I want to make sure. The [website](#) obviously is always open.

PAUL

Can I ask another quick question? Is this [clip](#) really hard to replace, because it just looks like it’s just the clip into the [microwave](#).

JOHN SOWDEN

It just snaps into the wall. You might have to take a putty knife and pry it out a little bit.

PAUL

But the new one just snaps into the wall?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes, it just snaps right in. As long as the hole it goes into hasn’t been burnt and enlarged. So if you haven’t used it in this condition for a while, you should be all right.

PAUL

I haven’t taken the [clip](#) out, but it looks like its burnt pretty bad.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, they burn pretty quick, but normally it’s just the plastic that’s been compromised. Just inspect the hole that it goes into.

PAUL

Can I use it now without the [shelf](#)?

JOHN SOWDEN

I would not use it at all until you get rid of the bare metal inside the cavity.

PAUL

Alright, thanks, and I appreciate your time.

1997 GE Profile Refrigerator Question about Where the Water Filter is Located

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And here with a question on a [GE Profile refrigerator](#), Jeri in White Lake, on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead please, Jerry.

JERI

Well, I have a [GE Profile refrigerator](#) that's about eleven years old. It was in the home when we moved here and just a few days ago, we put in a new water softener and the gentleman that helped us said it would be very wise of us to change the [filter](#) in the [refrigerator](#). Well, we can't find the filter. We have called [GE](#) and no one seems to be able to help us in terms of telling us where the [filter](#) is, or if it even exists. So I figured you would know if anyone would know.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, thanks for all the confidence. I can tell you that according to the [model number](#) you provided, it doesn't show that your unit has a filter that would come with the unit from the factory. There's no internal filter that I can see in the breakdown of your particular model. Now, it's also possible, and a lot of people do have an after-market filter. Basically all you do is cut the line that goes to your refrigerator coming from your household water supply and you put in a disposable charcoal [water filter](#). They're normally good for a year or so, depending on usage. It could be that you have one of those, but obviously without being able to see your home...

JERI

It's in the wall or something?

JOHN SOWDEN

It's either behind the [refrigerator](#) or it could be in the crawl space or downstairs or wherever underneath. It could be something that they noticed when they were putting the softener in but you never knew existed. If that's the case those are pretty straightforward to change and are normally under twenty dollars to put in. But as far as in your particular unit, like a lot of the newer machines that have a [filter](#) that you [screw](#) in and put the new filter in, I don't see one listed for your particular model. So you're looking for something that doesn't exist as far as the [refrigerator](#) itself.

JERI

Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

You might just want to give them a call and say, hey, you said I should change the [filter](#), did you see something downstairs? And maybe save you a little time, a phone call versus grabbing the flashlight and trying to find where they may have hid one of those.

JERI

All right, very good.

1995 Hotpoint Dishwasher Making Persistent Loud Humming Noise

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Here with a question on a [Hotpoint dishwasher](#), Chuck in Roseville, on the Appliance Repair Show.

CHUCK

Hi there. I have a [Hotpoint dishwasher](#), and it's between twelve and fifteen years old, I would say. It's so loud when it runs that you can hardly hear the television! That's how bad it is. And I'm talking about being in the front room and the kitchen is in the next room.

JOHN SOWDEN

It's a loud clanging sound you're hearing?

CHUCK

Yeah, [it's loud and it's a humming](#), and from the time I turn it on to the time it goes off, it seems like it's almost an hour and that seems like an awful long time. Because I'll sit there and I'll think, my god, is this thing ever going to shut off? And this has been going on a long time, so I'm just wondering, is this normal, because it's older? Or, is there anything I can do as far as insulating it more?

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, there are a couple questions here. Let me try to address them. The first one is, [is running for an hour normal?](#) Well, that depends on a lot of things, depending on what settings you select. If you choose a heated dry and a heated rinse cycle, the unit will run until the temperature in the tank runs to one hundred and fifty or more degrees.

CHUCK

I run it on energy saver.

JOHN SOWDEN

Normally that will not turn on the [heater](#), but in some units it may turn on the heat for the final rinse. It really depends on what options yours has and how it's wired. But all these things factor into how long it takes, because most of the time the water inside in a heated rinse heats about one and a half degrees per every two or three minutes. So it can take a

half hour to heat the water up from the incoming one hundred and twenty five or so degree water. To address the noise problem more than likely what you have there, if you remove the [lower panel](#) and have a listen to this, obviously you're going to have some live wires and stuff so I'm not advocating you sticking your head in there.

CHUCK
Right.

JOHN SOWDEN
But what you'll find is that the [pump and motor assembly](#) has a fan blade on it that cools the fan motor. More than likely, that fan blade is either bent and/or broken off the shaft where it's kind of free-wheeling off the motor shaft. And the only thing you can do at that point is replace the motor pump assembly.

CHUCK
Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN
And I think they're about one hundred and thirty to one hundred and forty bucks in there, and that's if you do the work. You need to look at things as far as what to do...

CHUCK
I might be better off purchasing a new one.

JOHN SOWDEN
Yeah, you need to look at the [racks](#) and see if they're rusty...

CHUCK
The racks, everything else looks fine as far as I can tell. I don't see any rust or anything in there. And another thing, it seems like every time it's done running, it stops and then heats to dry everything, and I open it up and there's a lot of stuff still wet.

JOHN SOWDEN
Yeah, that's typical if you've got cups and things that have a concave bottom to them.

CHUCK
Yes, that's exactly it. The water lies on there.

JOHN SOWDEN
And there's really nothing you can do about that.

CHUCK
Right, because there's no way you can lay them any different.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, you can try to kind of tilt them a little, but the reality of it is the thing is not going to bake the dishes for a couple of hours to get rid of that water. If you use a Jet Dry agent that helps to get that off, but if you have something that's going to pool that water, there's not much you can do. What I do on some of the things in my [dishwasher](#), and this is a real technical thing, I just open the door when I see it going into the dry cycle, and I just shake the [upper rack](#) a little bit, just to get some of that water off. And then the heat will get rid of the rest. But if you just leave it...

CHUCK

Exactly, because every time I empty it there's water lying on top of the cups. I have one more quick question; if I was to buy a new one, what should I look for as far as quietness? Because when I bought this, they said this is the quietest. What do you look for?

JOHN SOWDEN

First of all, when it comes to appliances and things like that, I always tell people, go to Consumer Reports, because they have a whole crew of people that get paid to beat on these things, and there's no third party interests or advertising, so they give the report how they see it. Maybe ten or twelve years ago this was one of the quieter ones out there, but they've come a long way these days. Most [dishwashers](#) of any brand are much, much quieter than the ones of a decade ago. A lot of them get into the decibel wars, where one will say ours runs at this sound level and ours is quieter. Most of them are going to be better than yours was when it was new. If you look at the research of it, some of the sales floors might even have some of the data as to how quiet they are. But they have more insulation around the tub, which helps with energy as well, and they do different things with the [wash arms](#) and the speed of the [motor](#) and how the motor is mounted on rubber grommets to get more isolation, etc. Anything you buy today is going to be a big improvement. As to which is the absolutely quietest one, I'm not sure, a lot of people claim that, but they're all pretty close. They're really quiet to a point that as a service man, you go out and sometimes you can't even hear them run!

CHUCK

With mine, you have to turn the TV up all the way! And you can always hear a click, when it gets to the next cycle.

JOHN SOWDEN

That's the [drain solenoid](#) activating. That's a good thing.

CHUCK

That's a good thing? Okay. Well I appreciate you taking my call.

2008 Kenmore Top Loading Washing Machine Water Not Hot Enough

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And here with a question on a new [Kenmore washer](#), Helen, in Detroit, on the Appliance Repair Show. Hi Helen, go ahead please.

HELEN

Yes. I purchased a [Kenmore washer](#) with the sensor on it, electronic. And when I turn the washer on hot, it comes in a little bit on hot and then it comes in hot and cold. And at the end of the cycle I test the water and the [water is warm, but it's not hot](#), and I wonder what I can do about it? I called the repairman, and I don't know if he was just avoiding fixing it, but he said he couldn't do anything about it because he didn't know the problem. That didn't make any sense.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, this is a new unit, correct?

HELEN

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. And this is a [top-load washing machine](#)?

HELEN

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, what's happened over the last several years is a lot of the manufacturers have come up with a new version of hot, and that is because of all the new energy laws and things of that nature. Most of the time, a machine ten or fifteen years ago, if you selected warm water, you would get a mix of about fifty percent hot and fifty percent cold. And then to meet energy requirements, they made it so it was forty percent hot water and sixty percent cold water coming in for the warm cycle. And now I've seen that a lot of the valves are now seventy-thirty, meaning that when you select warm, you're getting a higher percentage of cold water and less hot water. Now if your unit has a sensor in it on the [water valve](#) to monitor that, it's not going to let the water come in, when you set it to hot, over a certain temperature. It really depends on the machine; sometimes it's one hundred and ten, one hundred and twenty degrees, but it's doing what it's supposed to be doing to meet all the energy requirements. Water usage and water temperature is one of the hot issues. As far as to try to override it and things like that, I really don't think there's much you can do. If you still think it's a problem with the machine, or possibly it's not hooked up properly, you could still call them and see if they'll come look at, but if they tell you that is the nature of the beast, then that's something that you're just going to have to get used to with your new [washing machine](#) that wasn't an issue with the old one. And that's true of all the manufacturers out there. Especially the [front loaders](#) will have a steam cycle, where they actually heat the water up for a short period of time, but generally when you call for hot, it's not just flooding the machine with water from your hot water tank like they used to. They monitor that, add in some cold water to make the hot what they feel is enough to interact with the detergent and do a good job for you.

HELEN

Could I turn the cold water off, adjust it on the faucet, and just run it that way?

JOHN SOWDEN

You could try turning the cold water off, but if this has a [circuit board](#) on it then you might just get a [failure code](#) saying that [you're not getting any water](#).

HELEN

That's what I'm afraid of. I might just damage the routine of the [washing machine](#). I tried shutting it off and filling it up with hot water, and I'm afraid of that causing a problem too.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, you don't want to circumvent how the machine is designed to work. So it's one of those things that you'll probably find if you put it on for hot water and follow the instructions for soap usage and everything else, the machine will do a fine job on your clothes. It's just that you're going to have to get used to this machine, and you probably had the previous machine for what, ten or fifteen years, or longer, and you get into a routine and hopefully after a short period of time this one will become part of the routine.

HELEN

Is this really going to get my towels and bed sheets clean, though?

HELEN

Yes, and detergents have come a long way too. Like I said, they test these things and beat them up pretty well. But if you're using the machine correctly and following the instructions and you're not getting the results you would like, then I would take it up with the manufacturer and see if they can send somebody out. And you can look at another machine; depending on where you bought it and if it was a short time ago, you can return it and maybe get something that addresses your needs more. If you want to cook the clothes in there, a lot of the [front-loaders](#) get up to one hundred and sixty, one hundred and seventy degrees to sanitize the unit. But you're talking about a completely different style [washing machine](#) than the one you have.

1995 Maytag Washing Machine, Model LAT9304AAE, Leaving a White Residue on Clothes

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Gary has a question on another [Maytag washer](#), here on the Appliance Repair Show on NewsTalk 760 WJR.

GARY

Yes, good morning. I have a fifteen year old [Maytag](#), and the model is [LAT9304AAE](#), and for over a year now, my wife has been complaining about it, saying that soap residue stays on the clothing. She's tried double rinsing it, she's tried vinegar in the rinse cycle, and she's tried different soaps. I took a look at the setting on the hot water tank, and it's a little bit higher than halfway between warm and hot.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. You don't know what the temperature of the water coming into the tub is?

GARY

No, I do not, but the water coming into the sink is quite hot.

JOHN SOWDEN

So it's not an issue as far as your household plumbing goes. What about your machine? If you set it to hot water, does it just trickle in?

GARY

Can you bear with me and I'll just holler out to her?

JOHN SOWDEN

What you have there, if it's an older machine, is that the [water valve](#) (part # 22001274)

GARY

Yes, it is hot John, coming into the machine.

JOHN SOWDEN

When you set it to hot?

GARY

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

So as far as the soap going into the machine, you've used powder, liquid, you've tried different things?

GARY

Yeah, she's tried powder, she's tried liquids, and she's using a liquid right now.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. And you're saying the clothes are sudsy when they come out?

GARY

[To wife] The clothing isn't sudsy when it comes out, is it? [To John] No. More like a white film on the clothing.

JOHN SOWDEN

So you've got a white film on the clothing. Do you have a softener? Do you have hard water in your area?

GARY

No, we live in Washington Township and it is city water.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. The thing you could have there is what you're seeing could be a lot of things, even a part of the inner tub. If it's starting to deteriorate then some of that porcelain could be starting to get onto the clothes. Normally if you were using detergent powder and it wasn't dissolving, that would give you the white residue that you describe. I would start by, if you can, removing the [agitator](#) (part # 207228) and looking underneath it and see if you don't have any soap scum built up as well as in the inner tub as well. What happens is you have such a residual buildup in there that no matter what you do, you're going to have soap released into the machine, especially on an older unit. Most of those, the [agitator](#) (part # 297228) pulls straight up; yours probably has a small quarter-inch [screw](#) (part # 206478) down towards the lower portion of it that you have to remove or you'll be pulling on it all day long. And just have an inspection underneath and inside, because if you have a buildup of stuff existing in the machine, it doesn't really matter what you put in the machine, moving forward it's going to go ahead and release that in the wash. I would, again, try and cut back on the detergent, as a lot of the stuff these days is pretty concentrated. And then check the water temperature as well; if you set it at warm, if it's lukewarm it should be good enough to dissolve the detergent. But it's really going to take a physical inspection of the interior of the unit, if you think that usage isn't what's creating this.

GARY

Okay, very good. And if we still have issues with it we can always give your store a call.

JOHN SOWDEN

If you have a question you can just go to our [website](#) and type in "[Washer Help](#)" and it will take you to our washer help page; if you have more specific questions beyond that, you can give us your email address and ask that specific question. But I can tell you, the hardest thing when it comes to [washing machines](#) and [dishwashers](#) and anything that cleans is that wash ability problems are the hardest things to diagnose. Even when you're there in the home, it's hard to figure out exactly what's happening. In your case, you know who uses the machine every day, but I've been in a lot of situations where they say the machine is not doing this or that, and then you find out that the cleaning lady comes in and does their laundry for them and they're pouring in a half a gallon of this, and all this stuff. So it really is a pretty gray area and you just have to go with process of elimination, inspecting the machine, and trying to change your habits a little bit to make sure that the problem is not being created.

GARY

Well, I thank you for the tips!

2002 Maytag Neptune Washing Machine Shutting Down After Rinse Cycle

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Here's Elaine, in Chelsea, with a question on a [Neptune washer](#), on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead please, Elaine.

ELAINE

I have an original first model with the [dials](#) and not the push buttons, and it's had so many problems. But now what's happening, after the rinse cycle, the unit shuts completely down and turns off. And then what I do is go in and push the button and it goes back on and finishes its cycle up. It finishes the whole wash. Is it the [timer](#), what's going on? I've had the [pump](#) replaced. Don't know where to go from here?

JOHN SOWDEN

What other service have you had done on this?

ELAINE

It has a new [motor](#) and some other kind of thing.

JOHN SOWDEN

[Spin control board](#)?

ELAINE

Yeah, you know they had that lawsuit, and what they'd only give me was two services—that's all they would give me, instead of a replacement.

JOHN SOWDEN

So you've had the [lock assembly](#) and the control board and the [motor](#) replaced?

ELAINE

Yes. And then a [pump](#) has been replaced.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. It sounds like from what you're telling me, you could have another problem with the [board](#) or the [latch assembly](#). The other thing it could be is [you're not getting any cold water](#) or water to the unit. But from what you're telling me, if you start it up and it goes through the cycle again, then you've got an intermittent problem, and it's most likely going to be in the controls or possibly just in the wiring. Where the wiring harnesses plug onto the [boards](#), you could have a bit of corrosion there that's causing it to intermittently work.

ELAINE

Because there is water in the unit when it shuts off. It has water in the unit with the clothes. So you're saying that possibly [no water is coming in](#)?

JOHN SOWDEN

You said after rinse, and it has to fill with water to continue on and rinse?

ELAINE

Right and it does have water.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. So there are steps it has to go through, and if it doesn't sense that okay, I'm getting water, it will shut off and normally will give you an [error code](#). You're not getting any display on this?

ELAINE

No, because it's the old [dial](#).

JOHN SOWDEN

Oh, because this is one of the *original* originals!

ELAINE

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Inside the machine is where all the [circuit boards](#) are at; the [dials](#) on that particular unit, although they are connected to a [timer](#) and other things, they were more or less put there not to scare people by having all these flashing lights and such. So your controls look the same as your washer of ten or fifteen years ago, but internally you still have the same [circuit boards](#) as the ones with the digital display, for the most part, as far as how it works. Unfortunately this one, I'd ask you to probably have somebody to come out and look at it; these things can be hard to diagnose, even when you're there. If you do try to repair it yourself I'd recommend getting the [service manual](#) for it.

ELAINE

Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

The other thing it could be is that...when's the last time you had it serviced?

ELAINE

It was probably in the fall.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay, so recently, then. The reason I ask is at times you get into a situation where the [rear bearing](#) (part # 22004465) can get worn and it causes a drag on the drive system and it will overload and periodically shut off, and that's a problem where it gets worse not better. So if it's something that, as it starts to go up and gets to the spin speed, if there's drag on it, it will shut down. If the rear bearing is gone, you basically need the whole back half of the tub to be replaced with the bearing, and that's a pretty labor intensive, expensive job. You might want to have somebody come out and look at it, if it continues to do this. Again, it could be just a loose connection. If it requires a lot more repairs, you may want to look at how much money you want to put into this. It sounds like you've

had a lot of work done under warranty, which is a good thing, but as time goes on... This is about five or six years old?

ELAINE

Right, and actually, during the time that I purchased it five or six years ago we were building a home and it sat in a box for two years. So it actually wasn't as old, but when it came to the settlement, they looked at the age of the [washer](#), and that's why they gave me only two repairs.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, for people that build homes and buy appliances like that, most will go by installation date or closing date on the house, but you normally have to prove that to the manufacturer or the technician that comes out there. I've had situations myself where you run into, well, it's two years old, it's really two months old and it can get a little sticky, so all the documentation you can provide helps with that.