

Appliance Repair Show Transcript—June 1, 2008

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GE Refrigerator Ice Dispenser Not Dispensing Ice Cubes

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And we'll start things off this morning with a question on an [ice dispenser](#) from Mary, in Grosse Pointe, on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead please, Mary.

MARY

Yes. The problem is that the [ice maker](#) functions as far as making ice cubes, but [it does not dispense the ice cubes](#) into our glass. It just backs up, and then eventually all of it freezes and we have to take out the [container](#) where the ice comes into and then we melt it and put it back in there and it is able to make ice cubes. We just can't dispense the ice cubes.

JOHN SOWDEN

And when you say that you take it out and let it defrost...

MARY

We take it out, it's like the [reservoir](#) that holds it, and we take it out and melt the ice. A lot of times the bottom is frozen solid.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. And after you do that, it does function for a while until the problem re-occurs?

MARY

No, it never functions as far as dispensing the ice, no, that has not happened yet. It's just, I'm hopeful. I did it about a week ago, and we can get ice if we go in there and put a cup in there and just scoop it out but we are not able to dispense it.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. When you put your glass underneath the [lever](#) and push it in for ice cubes, do you hear anything in the freezer?

MARY

Yes, yes I do! The [light](#) goes on and I hear it, it's like it's trying to dispense. There's an electrical sound.

JOHN SOWDEN

So, you hear the grinding sound of the [auger motor](#).

MARY

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, if the [auger](#) is turning, then normally, electrically it should be working all right as far as to drive the [ice bucket](#). It's possible something in the drive internally on the bucket itself is broken. There's a plastic coupling in the back that interlocks with the kind of a U-shaped coupling in the back of the unit. And then it drives the blades of the [dispenser](#) up front, and anything broken in that can cause that condition. You can try to tear those things apart and rebuild them, or you can buy a new [bucket](#). Normally, they're fairly expensive: they're around one hundred bucks or so.

MARY

Okay and I'd just get that through a 1-800 number?

JOHN SOWDEN

RepairClinic.com.

MARY

Should I call [GE](#) or something?

JOHN SOWDEN

You can go to our website, www.RepairClinic.com, and put in the [model number](#) as it reads off of your refrigerator itself. Or, you could give our 800 number a call, we have people in our call center right now, and that's 1-888-343-4948. But I would pull it out, though, and look and see if you can spot anything that's physically broken. Also where the [bucket](#) goes into the back wall, there's a U-shaped bracket that helps drive that [auger](#); see if that's not broken or snapped off before you replace the bucket.

MARY

Okay, great! Thank you so much, you've been very helpful.

2006 GE Top Loading Washing Machine or Dryer Putting Holes in Laundry

JOHN MCCULLOCH

We go now for a question on a [washer](#) from Dave, in Flint, here on the Appliance Repair Show. Good morning, Dave! Go ahead, please.

DAVE

Good morning! I have a [GE top loading washer](#) and a [GE dryer](#) and they're both two years old; they came with the condo. One of these is putting holes in the laundry. I've been through the tubs in both of them and can't seem to find any sharp edges, anything that the clothing would snag on. I was just wondering if there's anything specific I could look for?

JOHN SOWDEN

So you're not sure if it's coming from the [washer](#) or the [dryer](#)?

DAVE

No, neither one, I can't narrow it down at all.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, it's something that you're going to have to be the laundry police and kind of monitor the stuff as it comes out of one and goes into the other, which means as you do a load of wash, you're going to have to inspect every garment to see, especially since you've already taken a quick look to see if there's anything noticeable in the whole thing. It really could be coming from either one. The one thing you might want to see is if the [washer](#), when it's washing, is spinning and agitating at the same time.

DAVE

Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

If it is, you could get the clothes that are swirling inside there to ball up and/or get caught. The other thing, of course, is always watch what you wash with one garment to another, that the zippers aren't snagging the sweaters, things of that nature. But honestly, without determining first where the problem lies, it's pretty hard to tell you which direction to go. It sounds like you've already done some basic homework as far as just a quick inspection, grab a flashlight and look around to see if there's anything real apparent. After that, you're going to have to, as you do the laundry, pull the stuff out of the [washer](#) and see if you notice anything. If you pull it out of the dryer and you do see something, then you know the problem's in the [dryer](#). Either one could cause something to get caught or pinched. Does this happen all the time, or just periodically?

MARY

Just periodically.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah. Unfortunately, intermittent problems are the hardest ones to catch and/or diagnose.

MARY

Mm-hmm. Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

So, I don't have any silver bullet for you on that one.

MARY

Okay, then. I appreciate it!

JOHN MCCULLOCH

So there was nothing really that jumped out on that one.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, without knowing where the problem lies, it's hard to say. Either the [washer](#) or the [dryer](#) can cause something to put a hole in the clothes. It could be a whole host of things.

Insinkerator Dishwasher Suddenly Stopped Working

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And here with a question on an [Insinkerator dishwasher](#), Victor, from Grosse Pointe Shores, on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead, Victor.

VICTOR

Good morning. We have an [Insinkerator dishwasher](#), as you said. Our problem is that first, we had an electric coffee pot that we had for several years and it burned out. Then we bought another coffee pot, an electric, and it lasted a couple days and it burned out. Now our [Insinkerator dishwasher](#) seems to have burned out, and they're both in the same location and both on different circuits. So, I don't understand and I need your help.

JOHN SOWDEN

You say that they're on different circuits. So if you throw the circuit breaker downstairs, it will either turn on or off the dishwasher?

VICTOR

Yes. It's marked dishwasher, and I'm quite sure that it is correct.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay and have you tried it when it's running, just throw that and see if it does in fact cut it off and does not cut off the coffee pot?

VICTOR

The coffee pot...

JOHN SOWDEN

Or, you could plug a light bulb in to that socket, or whatever, just to see.

VICTOR

I see what you're saying. No, I haven't tried that.

JOHN SOWDEN

You first want to make sure that they're not on the same circuit, so that you're not trying to fix something that's not broken, like the [dishwasher](#). Make sure that you don't have an intermittent connection somewhere. If they are on the same circuit, then I would say that your problem may be in the electrical source being supplied to it. If not, then I wouldn't think you have anything correlating there, other than probably bad luck—meaning that your [dishwasher](#) conked out at the same time as you were having problems with your coffee pots.

VICTOR

I see.

JOHN SOWDEN

The dishwasher [doesn't do anything](#) now?

VICTOR

Nothing at all. We had that odor, like with an electrical malfunction. You know how there's that electrical odor? Well, we had that from the coffee pots and then the odor lingered, and I said to myself, "Jeepers, it's really lingering!" but then it dawned on me, after my wife tried the [dishwasher](#) and it didn't work, I thought maybe the dishwasher burned out also, because it's just totally dead. Nothing happens at all.

JOHN SOWDEN

And this did occur at the same time, roughly?

VICTOR

Approximately. It was within about a week and a half time period.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, they could be on the same circuit and you could have a loose connection in one of your junction boxes or something of that nature. It's really weird that you keep blowing it out! You could have something in your fuse box that's causing an issue, or have a brownout condition or a ground in the system. You say it's the second coffee pot that burned out? It just quit? You put it into another receptacle and [it doesn't work at all](#)?

VICTOR

No, it just popped!

JOHN SOWDEN

Oh!

VICTOR

Popped, and the odor came out, an electrical odor.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

I'd call an electrician!

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, I'd say, especially when you start smelling burning conditions, I'd have an electrician come out and make sure everything is as it should be. If they get everything straightened around there and you still have problems with the [dishwasher](#), then go after it and see. But, it does sound interesting that they're both kind of within the same short span of time having the same issue. So, unfortunately with wiring, you never really know what's going on and what they did to branch out to feed power to the [dishwasher](#). You could just have a connection that's been hot, where the wire nuts have gotten hot and you have some burnt connections in the wall or in a junction box. But yeah, I agree with you John, I'd definitely have somebody come out and look at this one, especially when you're dealing with electricity and burning smells. That's never a good combination!

VICTOR

All right, sir. Call an electrician first?

JOHN SOWDEN

I would start there. It's certainly unusual that something would pop like that. Now, it's possible that you just got a couple of bad coffee pots and the [dishwasher](#) conked out at the same time and the wiring is fine but I'd feel better knowing that first, even if it was a charge to call an electrician in.

VICTOR

All right, sir. Thank you very much.

2004 Frigidaire Side By Side Refrigerator Stop Cooling

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Let's go to Howell for a question from Judy, here on the Appliance Repair Show.

JUDY

Hi! We have a [Frigidaire refrigerator](#) that happened to just quit on us. We had a gentleman come out and repair what he called "the brain" and he said if that didn't work then it's the compressor that needs to be replaced. We decided to unplug it and plug it back in and it worked for about a month and then it stopped again, and we went through the same process again, taking the [ice maker](#) out, leaving that out a little bit longer and it works for another month. So, we need some help.

JOHN SOWDEN

You had somebody come out and they replaced a [circuit board](#)? Is this a [side by side](#)?

JUDY

It was some sort of chip, but yeah, a side by side.

JOHN SOWDEN

And is the component he replaced up in the ceiling of the refrigerator section?

JUDY

I'm sorry, the upper area of the...?

JOHN SOWDEN

The refrigerator section—the upper control?

JUDY

In the refrigerator section? No, in the lower part.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. So you probably had a [relay board](#) or [circuit board](#) replaced.

JUDY

It was a relay board, yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay and now you say the refrigerator and freezer both [stopped cooling properly](#)?

JUDY

Correct.

JOHN SOWDEN

And is it kind of a slow thing, or do you wake up one morning and everything's warm? You don't notice any gradual reduction of efficiency or temperature?

JUDY

It does seem that way.

JOHN SOWDEN

That it's slowly getting worse?

JUDY

No, that it just shuts off.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. The thing is that, if the compressor were bad—not always, but generally—you wouldn't get any kind of cooling in there. It sounds like to me that he replaced the [circuit board](#) that sends current to the various components in the system, that which you might have is more of an intermittent relay in the [overload](#) for the compressor, or the

components that actually start the compressor could be sticking or the [relays](#) on some of those at times can fail and I would lean more towards that at this time, especially if you replaced the [board](#). Now how long ago did you say this was done?

JUDY

Three months ago.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. The first thing I would do is call the service company that did this and see what their warranty is on their repair. I can't speak for anybody, but most are between thirty and ninety days for a service call but I would certainly have them come back out and explain the situation, that it's doing the same thing, and see if they would work with you. If not, then you may look at a second opinion. How old is this machine?

JUDY

It's about four years old.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, so it's certainly not worth rolling it out to the curb just yet. Now if it needs a compressor, that's a very expensive repair. You're looking at between five and eight hundred bucks and probably closer to eight by the time you have everything installed. At that point, you're probably at half the cost of a new one. You may or may not have an extended warranty on that through the manufacturer, so I would ask you to dig out the [owner's manual](#) and see if you have any longer warranty on what they call the sealed system parts. That might help you there, but I would start at square one and see if they'll come back out and have another look at that.

JUDY

Okay. Thank you very much.

Dishwasher Water Gushing Out of Air Gap

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And we go now to...

JOHN SOWDEN

...Paul in Harrison Township...

JOHN MCCULLOCH

...On the Appliance Repair Show! Good morning, Paul. Go ahead, please.

PAUL

Hi. I have a [dishwasher](#) and when it discharges the water, it comes out of the vent by the sink. I mean, it just gushes out!

JOHN SOWDEN

So, you have a little shower going on right near your sink area?

PAUL
Right.

JOHN SOWDEN
And you've got an [air gap](#) (part # 300096), a little silver tower that's mounted next to your faucet?

PAUL
Right, right.

JOHN SOWDEN
Now, have you put a new [garbage disposal](#) in lately?

PAUL
No, I don't have one.

JOHN SOWDEN
Okay. Well, what that does is: when you drain the water out, the water is supposed to drain out through the center of that air gap; then it hits a dome and then the water is supposed to trickle back into your [disposal](#) or the other household plumbing. Every configuration is kind of different. If it's spraying out the air gap, what's happened is the portion of the [drain line](#) from your air gap to wherever it goes (in your case since you don't have a [disposal](#) it's probably into one of your other drain fittings) is plugged. So, if you take the cover off that, the silver cover, you'll either see a cap that you unscrew or a kind of an insert that pops out of there. You basically have a situation where you have debris plugging that up. You might want to go under the sink or wherever it's at and remove the [hose](#) going from the [air gap](#) (part # 300096) to your plumbing, the other existing drain, and clear that out. But that's where your problem lies: you've got an obstruction in your drain.

PAUL
Okay. Would it be like the main drain is probably plugged?

JOHN SOWDEN
I would start with the air gap. Look under the sink and you'll see the white plastic tower where your air gap goes. You have one coming from your [dishwasher](#), and then the other one goes to wherever it goes. Obviously, without a [disposal](#), where they would normally route that, it could be whatever creative thing they've done with the plumbing underneath the sink. So, I would start by removing that [hose](#), and you'll probably find that it's full of debris. You can replace the hose, or flush it out, blow it out and put it back on there and it should work properly.

PAUL
Great! Okay, thanks.

1983 Kenmore Washing Machine Water Slowly Draining Out During Wash Cycle

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Now we'll go to Marcel, in Canton Township, for a question on a [Sears washer](#) here on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead please, Marcel.

MARCEL

Good morning, John and John. I've got a Sears washer, a [Kenmore washer](#) that I've had for over twenty-five years, so it's served us faithfully very well. But for about the last five years, on the wash cycle, [it slowly dribbles water out of the drain](#). The washer works fine otherwise, but there's just a slow dribble out of that thing all the time when it's on the wash cycle.

JOHN SOWDEN

When it's on the wash cycle, you have [water that is slowly draining out](#)?

MARCEL

Yeah.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay.

MARCEL

It doesn't make a difference how high I raise the [hose](#). I thought maybe it was just a bit of pressure, and if I raised the hose way up it would stop but it doesn't.

JOHN SOWDEN

And you said this is about a twenty-five year unit?

MARCEL

Or more, yeah.

JOHN SOWDEN

Yes. So more than likely this is a [belt](#)-driven unit?

MARCEL

That could be. We purchased it around 1983, or a little before, I think.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay, that could very well be. On those particular units they have a [pump](#) that's got a lever on it. As it goes into spin, the [transmission](#) has two arms on it that move and shifts the pump open and closed. And what's more than likely happening is the flapper inside the pump is either worn, or you have a button or something in there that's causing that gate to not positively close, so it's going to constantly drain out. You basically are going

to end up replacing the [pump](#), or you might be able, if you get lucky, to remove the pump and find something caught in it, and put it back into operation.

MARCEL

Is that much of a job to remove the [pump](#)? I'm fairly mechanically inclined.

JOHN SOWDEN

On those units, you can normally lay it on its back or its front and on the under side of it there are two or three [bolts](#) that hold the [pump](#) in place and then the [pump pulley](#) at the top just intersects the [belt](#). If you're really feeling like you want to be really productive and do some preventative work, you could change the belt while you're under there. If it looks to be in good shape then I probably wouldn't mess with it, but if you see chunks missing out of it, you can replace the [belt](#). That's a lot more involved and labor-intensive. You have to tear apart a lot more [brackets](#) and things in there in order to get it around. Most instructions are on the package that the belt comes in, or you could get a [manual](#) for it that would give you a step-by-step. But that's a little more of a wrenching thing, and you have to get it around the [transmission pulley](#) and stuff, so it's a little more involved. But just for a [pump](#), normally a few [bolts](#) and you can pop the old one out, remove the two hoses that go to it, or possibly three [hoses](#). If you have a re-circulating water filter, if you have one of those little [lint filters](#) that snaps in on the underside that you clean out every load.

MARCEL

Well, on a unit that old...

JOHN SOWDEN

On a unit that old, honestly those are old war horses, so if everything else is working well and it's only fifty bucks for a new [pump](#), you might want to roll the dice on it. Even if you had to put a [belt](#) on it, the cost of the belt isn't expensive; it's just the labor involvement.

MARCEL

I can replace it myself. I kind of guessed it might be something like that.

JOHN SOWDEN

So, are there a lot of people that use this machine?

MARCEL

No, it's just my wife and me, so that's probably why it lasted longer. We haven't used it as much and it's lasted a long time. I'm very glad of it. Thank you fellows. I appreciate the good advice.

2003 Refrigerator Refrigerant Lines Leaking Due to Corrosion from Sulfur Water

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Here's Charles in, I believe it says Macomb, Ohio, here on the Appliance Repair Show. Charles, go ahead please. Where's Macomb, Ohio?

CHARLES

It's about fifty miles southwest of Toledo.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well Charles, I guess we'll get around to your question.

CHARLES

Okay. I live in an area where there's sulfur water.

JOHN SOWDEN

Uh-oh.

CHARLES

I have a [refrigerator](#).

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, and all the refrigerant lines are corroding?

CHARLES

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Along with everything else, probably. That's really tough on any steel or copper exposed units.

CHARLES

Is there any way that can be fixed, besides just recharging it?

JOHN SOWDEN

How old is the machine?

CHARLES

It's about five years old.

JOHN SOWDEN

And it's been determined that you've got a leak in the system?

CHARLES

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. Most often it is a replacement of whatever components that you have a leak in would be the best way to go about it. Meaning if the cooling coil has failed, if that is

where the sulfur has eaten through, then you have to replace the coil. If it's the condenser underneath, or both, then unfortunately this can be a very expensive proposition; you may want to start over again, unfortunately. The problem is that you can replace one component, but yet the other ones are just as subjected to the corrosion as well, so it might be an ongoing thing. You normally just can't add refrigerant and get many miles out of it—it's a short trip. So wherever the leak is, it's just going to leak back out again. Depending on the size of it, you might get a little time, but you're still going to spend some money to have somebody come out and do that; most often most responsible repair people will not put refrigerant in a system that they know is going to leak back out into the atmosphere. So they're going to want to fix it first anyway.

CHARLES

Yeah.

JOHN SOWDEN

Sorry to be the bad news guy.

CHARLES

Yeah. How about that?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, I've seen that in other areas. There are places in Michigan that have the same problem, where it's just really tough on anything that has exposed metal.

Sunbeam Under-the-Counter Wine Cooler Not Cooling and Motor Heating Up

JOHN MCCULLOCH

A question on a Sunbeam wine cooler, Don, in Rochester Hills, on the Appliance Repair Show.

DON

Yes. I have a wine cooler and it won't get cold and I leave it on for an hour and motor gets hot. It's a Sunbeam wine cooler.

JOHN SOWDEN

Is this a little under the counter job?

DON

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. And you say the motor gets...

DON

The motor gets hot.

JOHN SOWDEN

You don't hear anything? The compressor runs, or you don't hear it?

DON

I don't hear it.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay, but it just gets hot? You don't hear any clicking on and off or anything of that nature?

DON

Right, there's no clicking. It just keeps running. You can hear the compressor humming a little bit.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay.

DON

But it doesn't get cool.

JOHN SOWDEN

Well, if it's humming, it's either trying to start and not, in which case you'd hear a clicking on and off on the overload. If it's running and you hear the compressor, yet you're not getting any cooling, then more than likely you have sprung a leak, or you have an inefficient compressor or a sealed system problem of some variety. I take it this is one of those two hundred dollar under the counter type jobs?

DON

Yes.

JOHN SOWDEN

Unfortunately, at that point, I'd look at what the warranty is on it, but if you have a leak, or the compressor itself has failed, then it's not worth repairing, given the cost of repair versus investing in a new one.

DON

Okay. So the best thing to do is just buy a new one, right?

JOHN SOWDEN

Is it still in the hole under the counter or is it freestanding?

DON

Yes, it's freestanding.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. I'd pull it out and make sure that in fact the compressor is in fact running, and not just trying to start. Some of them have a small fan motor that helps cool the compressor; if that failed it would cause it to run hot and not work very well. The other option is if you want to make sure that it's a terminal problem, some repair places will take in carry-in units, where you can drop it off somewhere and have them diagnose it for a fee. But most of the time, if it's running and not cooling then it's either a leak or a bad compressor, and either one is terminal.

DON

Okay. Well I appreciate that very much.

JOHN SOWDEN

I haven't had very good news for people today.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

Oh boy! Remember last week, in fact the last two weeks running, we've had guys calling in thanking you for giving them the right advice, and then going on to another problem they have with another appliance. This week, it's a lot of terminal appliances.

JOHN SOWDEN

I'm the grim reaper today, I guess.

Over-the-Range Microwave Oven Making Rattling and Squeaking Noises

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And we'll go to Gary, in Macomb Township, with a question on a [microwave](#), here on the Appliance Repair Show. Go ahead please, Gary.

GARY

Good morning! I have an issue with a [microwave oven](#), it's [an above the range vent/microwave oven](#). It's starting to make a sound, a rattling sound punctuated by a squeaking sound, and I'm wondering if this needs to be serviced. It does heat fine, though; everything else works fine, but it just keeps making a noise.

JOHN SOWDEN

It's making a noise in the [microwave motor](#) or in the [fan motor](#), if you have the fan turned on over your [stove](#)?

GARY

Nope, it's in the [microwave](#).

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. Do you have a [carousel](#) in this?

GARY

Yes, I do.

JOHN SOWDEN

Most often if it's running, it's hard, obviously, to listen and find exactly where it's coming from, but from what you're describing I would suspect the sound is probably coming from what they call the [stirrer motor](#) or the [turntable motor](#) that is turning the [tray](#). A lot of times they'll start to squeal and/or the rattling could be from the tray kind of shimmying on the [roller ring assembly](#).

GARY

Well, I did take that off, and it's still making a sound. I did take the [tray](#) out.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. Again, the [motor](#) underneath it that drives it could be the culprit.

GARY

Okay.

JOHN SOWDEN

But it's cooking fine other than that?

GARY

Yes, it is.

JOHN SOWDEN

Normally it's something in the drive system, then. Meaning that, if it's something in the high voltage system it will be more of a buzz noise and you will not have it cooking properly. So I'd say it's either in the [fan](#) that cools the magnetron, which is not a real normal failure; most often the [stirrer drive motor](#) is the one that causes the squealing and/or starts to fail. If you put the [turntable](#) in and you see it jerk every now and then, that's sometimes a sign that it's on its way off. If you put the [model number](#) as it reads off your [microwave](#) into our website, [RepairClinic.com](#), you can see what it's going to run for a replacement of such a thing.

GARY

So, maybe I should wait until it fails and then do something? It's nothing that I have to do right away?

JOHN SOWDEN

Yeah, if it stops I'd want to replace it just because to have that working properly helps with cooking the food uniformly. Otherwise, if you can endure the noises, then yeah, you can wait for it to conk out.

GARY

It is indeed turning and cooking appropriately. It's just it sounded like it was coming from the top of the unit rather than the bottom.

JOHN SOWDEN

If it sounds like it's coming from the top, there is a small [fan motor](#) in most that turn on and cool the magnetron.

GARY

Yes, that seems to be working fine. It cycles on and off.

JOHN SOWDEN

Again, trying to pinpoint where it's coming from is the first thing, and I know it's hard to do. From there, if it seems like it's still coming from up top, then I would lean more towards the [cooling fan](#) for the mag tube.

GARY

Okay. I will wait and see what happens.

1983 Kelvinator Electric Oven Not Heating and Indicator Light Does Not Illuminate

JOHN MCCULLOCH

And, here with a question on a [Kelvinator electric oven](#), Kevin in Brooklyn, Michigan, on the Appliance Repair Show. Hi Kevin, go ahead please.

KEVIN

I've got a [Kelvinator stove](#) that's at a cottage, and obviously I only use it in the summer.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right.

KEVIN

It worked fine last summer. [The stove top works fine, but the oven doesn't work.](#)

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. And how old is this?

KEVIN

It was given to me. But if I had to guess, it's got to be twenty-five years old.

JOHN SOWDEN

What color is it?

KEVIN

It's brown.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. That kind of gives a clue into its vintage.

KEVIN

Yeah!

JOHN SOWDEN

It's hard to say, because the majority of appliances are white, so if it's white it could be any age. But there were certain colors in the past that kind of clue us in, which are the Coppertone, which was the terminology that the manufacturers used for the brown, and the Avocado, and Harvest Wheat was the gold.

KEVIN

It's got one of those, a 'Pan-O-Matic' as they call it; on the top, one of the burners...

JOHN SOWDEN

Oh, okay, so it senses the bottom of the pan and adjusts the temperature accordingly?

KEVIN

Yeah. It's got a funny different [dial](#). I'm not actually near it right now.

JOHN SOWDEN

It's got "a [burner](#) with a brain" I think was the marketing slogan back then.

KEVIN

Exactly.

JOHN SOWDEN

Okay. So you went up to the cottage last weekend and it wasn't working?

KEVIN

Correct. What happens is you've got two [dials](#): you've got the one for the temperature and one for setting it to bake or broil or whatever and there's a [light](#) that will indicate that it's on. The light's not lighting up now, but when I turn the [dial](#), it will make a clicking noise, almost like it used to, like it's going to work but it obviously doesn't. The light doesn't come on.

JOHN SOWDEN

Right. Well, there are several things it could be. It could be a problem in the [switches](#). There should be somewhere on that unit, probably in the back panel, and you might have to remove the back panel, but there's a wiring diagram that will give you an idea of what's happening in that circuit. If the light doesn't come on... normally if the light is on and it's not heating then I would suspect the [element](#). If the [light](#) is not coming on, depending on the controls, I would lean more towards a [thermostat](#) or the [selector switch](#) as you pointed out. But being an older unit and being up where it's not used frequently, sometimes you can have broken wiring get in there, because at times critters like to climb into stuff and chew on things. So, you could have some wires that have been compromised, just due to its location. I would start by inspecting the wiring, obviously unplugging the unit first, and from there, as far as whether it's the [oven thermostat](#) or [selector switch](#), you're going to have to use the wiring diagram. Most of them will show

when you turn the unit to bake, that these contacts are open and these contacts are closed in the selector, so you can normally follow it and see which one has failed. The problem is, given the vintage, even if you figure out what's wrong with it you might not be able to get parts for it.

JOHN MCCULLOCH

But we wish you the best of luck!