

As The Toilet Turns



Custodial/Maintenance Staff Newsletter

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S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Do You Remember? - Part One

Table of Contents

It's in the Contract [Pg. 2](#)

Chemical/Cleaning
Related Word Search [Pg. 2](#)

Gettin' It Out! [Pg. 3](#)



This issue of *As the Toilet Turns* marks the beginning of the tenth year of publication. Every month articles, anecdotes, reviews, puzzles and general information have been shared. The goal is always to increase knowledge and provide insight into custodial and maintenance issues. As this 2011-12 school year begins, we once again look forward to sharing interesting information and beneficial points that will be useful to our readers.



Complete the review! Next month, see what you remember from Part Two of the review of last year's newsletters. Stir up some settled knowledge in your mind.

What knowledge did you glean this year? What useful information did you absorb for use in your building or for yourself? A brief overview of a few articles appearing throughout the year in the monthly custodial/maintenance newsletter will help us jump start our memories.

September started the 2010-11 school year with an article by Curt Bowdish of the Walter E. Nelson Company dealing with cross-contamination. Cross-contamination refers to transferring germs from one surface or area to another. Cleaning practices to avoid would be things like using the same rags to clean surfaces in the classroom as you would in the locker room. One would not use the same mop in the kitchen that was used in the restrooms. The same would apply to toilets and urinals. Rags or Johnny mops used on those fixtures would NEVER be used to wipe down or clean sinks and faucets. The best way to limit cross-contamination is by washing one's hands, using the proper cleaning products, avoiding the use of the same cleaning materials in several areas and cleaning using common sense.

Bedbugs hit the headlines in **October**. Bedbugs are on the rise in buildings and homes across the U.S. Due to worldwide travel, these little guys are traveling the globe free. Although they don't carry disease*, they can be a big nuisance and their bites can be irritating and extensive. Several suggestions were given as to limiting their abilities to invade your home or school. These included being scrupulous about cleaning and changing bedding, checking furniture closely before bringing it home from elsewhere and applying pesticides to cracks and crevices.

As **November** dawned, the subject of de-icers appeared. A brief lesson on the chemistry of how de-icers work was introduced including the fact that these products work by lowering the freezing point of ice and snow thus allowing surfaces covered to melt and thus preventing slips and falls during inclement weather.

Reaching the heart of winter, **December's** article highlighted generator safety. Due to the
(Continued on page 2)

* *Cleaning News—5-12-11—Vancouver, BC*

Bedbugs with MRSA?

The one bright side to having bedbugs — if you wanted to be optimistic about it — has always been that at least the tormenting critters didn't transmit disease. But now researchers in Vancouver report that they've found bedbugs with methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, or MRSA.

The scientists studied five bedbugs, taken from three patients treated at St. Paul's Hospital. All three patients were residents of Vancouver's poor Downtown

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from [Remember](#))

potential for increased use during the winter, a few tips on the use of generators were provided. Never connect generators directly to your home's wiring. Never plug it into an outlet in your home. Don't overload the generator. NEVER use a generator indoors or in an attached garage due to the release of deadly carbon monoxide. Use proper cords and keep children away from generators at all times.

In **January** an article entitled "Parents and Teachers May Want to Consider Disinfecting High Traffic Areas" appeared. This article dealt with lunch room tables and other surfaces and the bacteria found on them. The need to disinfect them regularly was highlighted. Areas that contained the most contamination and need regular attention included computer mice and keyboards, the bathroom paper towel handle, water fountains, sink faucets and library tables. Teachers were encouraged to wipe down "hot spots" in classrooms throughout the day to minimize contamination and parents should teach their children proper and healthy techniques to limit exposing themselves to bacteria.

In next month's issue we will share highlights from February to June. Why not join us and see if you remember the points presented and the benefits of using these nuggets of knowledge in your own life and as a means to increase the cleanliness and functioning of your school building..

(Continued from [Cleaning News](#))

Eastside, where both bedbugs and MRSA have been on the rise in recent years. The researchers wanted to see if there was a connection.

So they crushed and analyzed the bugs and found three samples with MRSA, the superbug that is resistant to most commonly used antibiotics. The two other samples had vancomycin-resistant *Enterococcus faecium*, or VRE, a less dangerous antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

That's pretty much all they know at this point. It's not clear, for example, whether the drug-resistant germs were transmitted from people to bedbugs, or the other way around. The strain of MRSA the scientists found was consistent with community-associated MRSA found in other Downtown Eastside residents.

It's also not clear whether the bacteria existed on the bedbugs or *in* them. That is, were the bedbugs carrying MRSA on their backs, or were the bacteria living and growing inside them? Either way, it's bad news: if bedbugs are capable of carrying and transmitting MRSA the way a mosquito spreads malaria, it could mean a whole new vector of human disease.

"To the best of my knowledge, we have not seen any research that has proven bedbugs have been able to pass diseases to their human hosts," says Gail Getty, a research entomologist at the University of California, Berkeley, who specializes in urban pests. "Although they do carry pathogens, there is no single scientific study that has proven a transfer." (Past data show that the hepatitis B virus can survive in bedbugs for six weeks after feeding, but there is no evidence that the bugs are able to transmit disease.)

(Continued on page 3)

It's In the Contract

Section 3.7. If any other bargaining unit gets District insurance coverage for vandalized vehicles, PSE members will get the same benefit.

Section 3.7.1. No employee shall be required to transport students or District equipment and materials in their own private vehicles. Any employee who chooses to do so with authorization of an administrator shall be covered by District insurance, but such insurance is secondary to their own. All employees shall follow District Policy 8131 when using their own private vehicles.

Section 3.8. Employees whose positions are eliminated or downgraded due to changes in District facilities or procedures shall be frozen at their current hourly rate until the rate for the downgraded position matches it. Such employees shall retain their seniority in the former classification for two (2) years. The Association may waive Article X to accommodate such employees in their attempts to transfer to higher paying jobs. This downgrade grandfather shall not apply where the transfer to a lower position occurs as part of a reduction in force.

Gettin' It Out!

Plumbing can be frustrating to say the least. For example have you ever had a faucet that was dripping or not shutting off all the way and you discovered upon disassembling it that the reason for the drip is that some of the washers and nuts on the faucet cartridge have fallen off and gone down inside the water line? How in the world will you remove them?

You could try fishing them out but that may not work well. Try this. Put the strainer in the drain, put a cup or some kind of container over the open hole where you removed the faucet cartridge and then turn the water on giving it a good blast into the container covering the hole. The water pressure will blow the parts out of the line and into the upside-down container. They will most likely fall into the sink where you can retrieve them and rebuild your faucet cartridge.

(Continued from page 2—[Cleaning News](#))

If, on the other hand, bedbugs simply carry MRSA the way an airplane tray table does, it's less troubling but still significant: bedbugs could still spread the germ from person to person, especially in close-quartered living situations like homeless shelters; the bacteria can survive on surfaces for hours or even days under the right conditions.

"Even though this is a small study, it suggests that bedbugs may be playing a role in the transmission of MRSA in inner-city populations where bedbug infestations are a problem," said Marc Romney, one of the study's authors and the medical director of infection prevention and control at St. Paul's Hospital.

Since MRSA enters the bloodstream through open wounds or cuts, it's technically possible that if an infected bedbug were to find its way onto an infested person — with the telltale itchy welts and broken skin from scratching — it could pass on the bacteria.

"I've been predicting this for years," says entomologist Dr. Michael F. Potter, a professor at the University of Kentucky, in an e-mail, "seeing how all it takes is a breakage of the skin for infection."

If left untreated, MRSA can cause pneumonia or infections of the skin, blood and joints. The bacteria, once confined to hospitals, has been increasingly found in community settings like locker rooms and gyms, and kills 19,000 Americans each year. Recently, the FDA approved a quick diagnostic test that promises to help infected patients receive treatment more quickly.

Chemical/Cleaning Related Word Search

Find the words to the right hidden in the puzzle below.



T D B T R G N W E R Y P S L O
 O N S J L E V L E A R E P O P
 S U A A U G T S J G A R O H P
 R T S T E P A A I W N O N O B
 D S R K C E W S W O R X G C H
 Y A K I R E C D I X E I E L Q
 L J W G P O F T R A T D K A D
 Y R E D D P O N R J A E G O S
 C D Y N P P E P I A U O H U R
 D E F O A M E R M S Q S J L M
 R E T T O P S O A A I I S M K
 B L E A C H Y W J L H D B P L
 T E M O C F C W O R U S Q P Q
 O S T K T T A P R Z G B J Y P
 Q V E I K W A X Y N H R V J P

AJAX
 ALCOHOL
 BLEACH
 COMET
 DEFOAMER
 DISINFECTANT
 GLASS
 GUM
 NEUTRAL
 PEROXIDE
 POLISH
 QUATERNARY
 RAG
 RUST
 SHAMPOO
 SPONGE
 SPOTTER
 STRIPPER
 WATER
 WAX

