

WHAT'S BUZZIN'



We're Back!

We are thrilled to bring you the much-awaited revival of our newsletter after a decade-long hiatus! We thought it was time to reconnect, share, and celebrate the wonderful community that is Smithereen.

In this edition, we're diving into family news, exciting updates, and a sprinkle of fun to brighten your day. Whether you're a seasoned member of the Smithereen team or a recent addition, this newsletter is crafted with you in mind.

Join us on this journey down memory lane and into the heart of our vibrant Smithereen community. As we embark on our first issue in over 10 years, let's make it a celebration to remember.

Here's to a renewed connection, shared laughter, and the spirit of Smithereen!

Warm regards,
Marina Martinez
Billing Specialist/Corporate Office

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MINIATURE COMMUNITY WITHIN THE WALLS

By: Matt Clauson

Along with all of the larger pests that we regularly encounter, there exists an ecosystem of pests that live in small numbers throughout all large buildings in the Chicago area.

Both you as technicians and the customers might not ever notice that these pests are there.

This community consists of primarily 3 different insects - Psocids, Plaster beetles and Odd beetles. There are some other minor players in this system, but those are the 3 main ones.

Psocids, also called booklice, are so named due to being found amongst old books where they will feed on the natural glues in the bindings. They are extremely small, 1-2 mm, and need a magnifying lens to identify them. They appear as tiny specks along the edges of glueboards



Female Odd Beetle



Plaster Beetle



Male Odd Beetle

Plaster beetles, also called minute brown scavenger beetles, are also small, but can be more readily seen with the naked eye. They are around 1.5mm in length. There are a few species in this family that are all about the same size and have the same habits. They appear as small brown spots along the edges of glueboards.

Psocids and plaster beetles, both feed on mold and mildew. They can exist in low numbers, feeding off of the small amounts of these fungi that grow in dust accumulations in cracks and crevices. It is when you start seeing large numbers of them, that they become an indicator of a moisture problem.

Then there is the predator living amongst them, the odd beetle. Odd beetles are one of the smallest members, 2-3 mm, of the carpet beetle family. They are called odd beetles because of the fact that the adult females remain what is called larviform and the adult males resemble an actual beetle.

As stated earlier, It is when you start seeing large numbers of psocids and/or plaster beetles that you then know there was some kind of moisture problem inside of the walls. The problem with using this as an indicator, is there is usually a couple of months of lag time from when the leak occurred to when the pests start to emerge from the walls. It takes that long for the fungus to grow, followed by population growth. It is when either the food source begins to dry up or the population just gets that big that you will see them. You will tend to see the odd beetles show up later, catching the larvae and the males on your monitors. Rarely do you ever see a female odd beetle.

A lot of buildings will see an uptick in these two pests in the summer after heavy spring rains. This will tell you that there were roof leaks or pipe leaks. Condensation on ventilation can cause mold growth as well, leading to an uptick in these pests.

Another example that comes to mind, we had an apartment building where a couple of tenants on the 10th floor had numerous plaster beetles coming from ceiling fixtures and then congregating around kitchen and bathroom fixtures. After thoroughly inspecting both units, we then inspected the units above on 11. It turned out that one of those units had had a leak pipe in the bathroom, which they had obviously repaired themselves, so maintenance was never informed. You could still see the extent of the water damage on the walls and baseboards. The treatment involved dusting in the ceiling of the tenants below and the walls of the unit where the leak was.

Inspection is key with these infestations, as with all pests. Finding the source of moisture is your best bet to ensure the problem does not occur again. Treatments with residual sprays and getting dusts into wall voids can help reduce the population, but you are generally only knocking down some of the adults. Most of the time it is a wait it out situation. They will eventually die off. Talking to the customer, explaining the pests and the cause, will go a long way towards easing their minds.



ANNIVERSARIES

October - December 2023



- Rob Lang (105) - 24 years
- Yvonne Govea (109) - 23 years
- Troy Lewis (103) - 21 years
- Darwyn Smith (102) - 17 years
- Orlando Hernandez (103) - 9 years
- Nestor Fuentes (101) - 8 years
- Edgar Gibson (103) - 8 years
- Jovanni Espinosa (103) - 6 years
- Troy Messner (401) - 6 years
- Ron Schulze (401) - 6 years
- David Gussie (101) - 5 years
- Gregory Teig (201) - 5 years
- Jason Martinez (201) - 4 years
- Lawrence Saunders (301) - 4 years
- Brandon Runner (301) - 4 years
- Jelani Nelson (103) - 3 years
- Patrick Philbin (109) - 3 years
- Muhaimin Shamsuddin (109) - 3 years
- Jason Harlow (302) - 2 years
- Christopher Miller (102) - 2 years
- Alexander Meikel (201) - 1 year
- Nicholas Thilmany (101) - 1 year
- Jeremy Vazquez (101) - 1 year
- Dylan Klawuhn (201) - 1 year

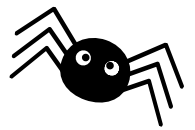


CATCH
ME IF YOU
CAN!

NEW HIRES

October - December 2023

Rafael Torres (101)
Victor Benitez (103)
Daniel Robinson (103)
Miguel Redding (201)
Patrick Ferguson (302)
Samuel Opsal (302)



Hooray to these
guys for getting
their...



IDPH Licenses:

Marcos Gonzalez (103)

Troy Lewis (103)

Jelani Nelson (103)

Wisconsin Licenses:

Jeff Furman (101)

Matt Clauson (109)

CONGRATS TO
CHRIS MYERS
(302) ON THE
NEW ADDITION
TO HIS FAMILY!
A BABY GIRL
VERONICA
MYERS!

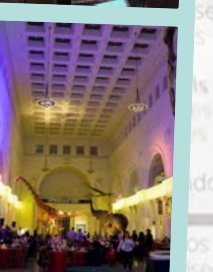
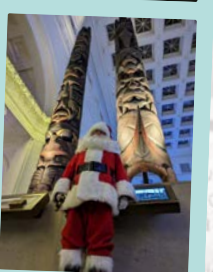
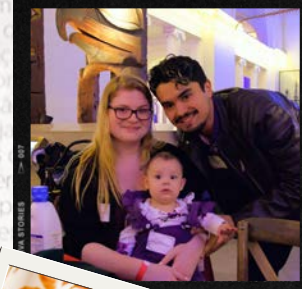
CONGRATS TO
CHERYL
LIPOWSKI'S (109)
DAUGHTER
AMANDA KRONON
SHE GOT
ENGAGED!

CONGRATS TO
KELSEY CELUS
(302) ON
TYING THE
KNOT!

CONGRATS TO
LIZ LOPEZ (109)
ON BUYING A
HOUSE!

Some pics from
our Holiday Party
this past
December
@ The Field
Museum!

NEWS





EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER

Drum roll please



JEFFERY SLATER

"Jeffery has been with Smithereen for 4 months and he is embracing the Smithereen way. He does not leave accounts behind which limits unservice. He has been very reliable. Jeffery follows his appointment list on a daily basis, and if a change has to be made due to the customer's request, he will call management to inform us. The narratives on his service reports are very good, and exactly the way we have asked the techs to do them. He does not hesitate to call management if he is not sure about any situation. He asks questions, and is very respectful in his communication with customers, management and his peers. Jeffery is learning at a quick pace, always looking to improve. He has done a great job in his first 4 months with Smithereen and office 102 is very proud of him." - Chris Magnuson (Operations Manager Office 102)

PAWS AND WHISKERS


JANUARY 2024

Unveiling the Charismatic Pets of Smithereen!


VOL. 29



BUCKLEY (BPP)



MILO (ERH)



KING (AMB)



ARNOLD (RAS)




MEECHIE (EEC)



MALAKAI (CCM)



KONKY (MSM)



LILI (MWJ)



HUCKLEBERRY
FINN (JRJ)




JELLY ROLL
MORTON (YVG)



MOOSE (CCM)



MARA (CCM)



JINX (PKP)



GEORGIE (CAK)




MAVERICK (CCM)



SASSY (AMB)



SHEBA (JTS)



LOAF (JTS)



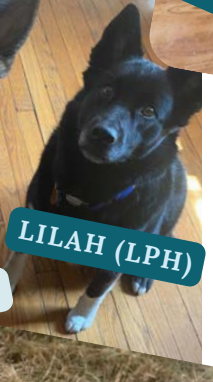
KASPER (CDD)



BELLA, PIP, & JINXY
(MMW)



PEYTON (LPH)



LILAH (LPH)



LUKE (JPM)



WILLIE (BZB)

HR CORNER

Earn \$1,000 Easy Money!

Smithereen is hiring technicians for all offices. Have your referral apply at www.smithereen.com or bring them an application! If they are hired, you get a referral bonus of \$1,000 after they successfully pass the 90 day mark.

No experience necessary!
See Cheryl in HR for more details



Attention all Health Dental & Vision Insurance Holders:

New Enrollment Period Starts February 1st 2024 & ends
on February 7th 2024

The new insurance will be in effect starting
March 1st 2024 - February 28th 2025

Please submit any and all changes to
Cheryl at clipowski@smithereen.com by February 7th!



COMMUTE CASH CARD: UNLOCKING CONVENIENCE



Do you travel by CTA, Metra, or Pace? Well you're in luck! Smithereen is now offering a pre-tax benefit for it's employees to pay for transit and parking costs. By using pre-tax dollars, employees can save up to 40% annually on their commuting costs. There are 2 ways you can participate: obtain the RTA Transit Benefit Prepaid Mastercard or use Ventra Direct Loads. More details on the two types below!

RTA Transit Benefit Prepaid Mastercard:

The RTA Transit Benefit Prepaid Mastercard is a reloadable prepaid card that can only be used for qualified commuter benefit purchases where Debit Mastercard, Maestro cards, and NYCE cards are accepted. Employees can use the RTA Transit Benefit Card at a station sales window, a ticket vending machine, or to make an online transit purchase only where transit products are sold. If the parking benefit option is activated, the card may also be used at CTA, Metra, and Pace Park & Ride stations as well as other qualified parking garages where the same types of card payments are accepted.

The RTA Transit Benefit Card is mailed after the 17th of the month, prior to the benefit month of which you ordered. The account is funded on the 19th of each month and the funds are available for use on the 20th of each month.

Ventra Direct Loads:

Ventra Direct Loads allows pre-tax funds to be directly deposited into an employee's existing Ventra account for use on the CTA, Pace and Metra (Metra riders can buy and display mobile tickets with their smartphones using the Ventra app only). Ventra accounts can be loaded with a pass products or select denominations in transit benefit value; the direct load will be available by the last day of each month.



WORD SEARCH

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

ANTS

BEDBUGS

BEES

BEETLES

BIRDS

BOXELDERS

CENTIPEDES

COCKROACHES

CRICKETS

EARWIGS

FLEAS

FLIES

HORNETS

MICE

MOSQUITOES

OPOSSUMS

PIGEONS

PILLBUGS

RACCOONS

RATS

SKUNKS

SPIDERS

SQUIRRELS

WASPS