

Teaching Toilet Training to Developmentally Delayed Individuals

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We examined the progress of all individuals who have gone through a behavioral toilet training program at The Judge Rotenberg Center (www.judgerc.org), over the past three years. The toilet training program makes use of an entire room which is dedicated to toilet training. Individuals who used this room have various diagnoses to include mental retardation and autism. This room allowed the individuals to be no more than eight feet away from the toilet during the hours 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., either sitting on the toilet, or receiving instruction at a workstation that was in academic or self care skills. (Exhibit 1-2) Individuals received one-on-one instruction, while gradually decreasing the time spent on the toilet throughout the day.

Method

Participants and Setting

There have been twenty two participants in the toilet training program. Ages range from seven years old to thirty six years old. All participants were classified as either autistic or multiply handicapped and were listed as severely or profoundly retarded. There have been five females and seventeen males.

All participants attended school at the Judge Rotenberg Center and lived in one of JRC's group homes. All participants were non-verbal, with limited means of communication.

The toilet training room is located in one of JRC's school buildings. The room was comprised of 6 large bathroom stalls, a sink, refrigerator, long tables, a computer work station and a reward area with a television and comfortable chairs. Each participant was assigned a stall, and a seat at the long table. Their seat was assigned so that they would be no more than 8 feet from their designated bathroom stall.

Measures and Instruction

The participants arrived at the Toilet Training Room at, approximately 9 AM each morning and departed at approximately 7 PM each evening, however, data was collected for 24 hours per day. When a participant first started in the Toilet Training Room, he/she would spend five minutes either at the work table or in the reward area and then spend five minutes on the toilet. While on the toilet, the participant's 1-1 staff would verbally praise them for staying on the toilet, sing songs to/with them, and give them beads to play with or provide small toys for them to play with. If the participants voided on the toilet, the staff that was assigned to them and anyone else in the room would praise them and immediately provide them with a very rewarding item, such as a walk or an edible. In addition, whenever the participants entered the stall, they were verbally and/or physically prompted to sign bathroom or use their communication device.



Exhibit 1



Exhibit 2

As the participants were able to go for longer and longer periods of time off of the toilet without voiding in their clothes, their time off of the toilet was increased. Time off the toilet continued to be increased in five minute increments, dependent on the absence of toileting accidents. When in the toilet training room, the participants did not wear a diaper. The diaper was faded in other environments such as the residence and bed when the participants were able to increase the amount of time spent off the toilet with out any toileting accidents.

Recorded data included number of voids in the toilet and number of voids outside the toilet.

Results

Of the twelve participants, ten successfully completed the toilet training program. Successful completion is defined as not having a void outside the toilet for two weeks and being able to wait sixty minutes between bathroom opportunities. Two participants did not successfully complete the toilet training program. At this time, there are eight participants in the program. Of the 12 students who completed the program, 10 (83%) were successfully toilet trained. (Exhibit 3)

Toilet training was completed in an average (mean) of 167 days, with a range of 99 to 340 days. Over a six week period, immediately preceding toilet training, participants had an average of 45 voids outside the toilet. During the six weeks immediately following toilet training, participants had an average (mean) of 8 voids outside the toilet, over a six week period. (Exhibit 4)

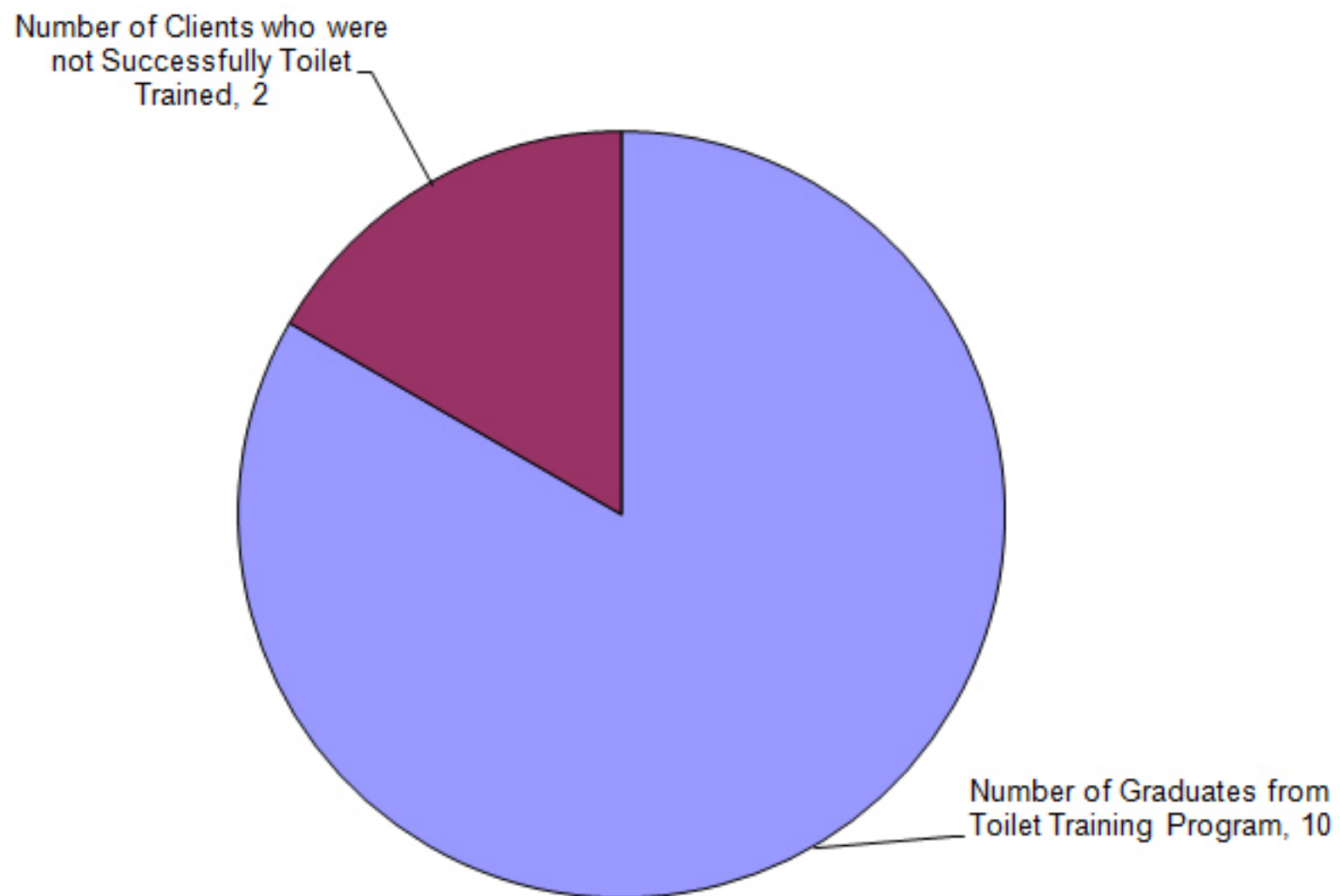
While in toilet training, many other skills were learned. These include, buttoning, unbuttoning, zipping, unzipping, washing hands, brushing teeth, putting clothes on (underwear, pants, shirt), table manners, setting the table, sitting quietly and folding clothes. Communication skills were increased through the use of communication devices and teaching sign language through manding. Social skills were improved upon, due to the many rewarding walks and interactions with preferred staff.

Discussion

The toilet training program has been very successful. Participants experienced an increase in quality of life, due to being toilet trained, and learning so many new skills. These skills and toilet training has generalized to other environments, to include the classroom, the residence and in the community.

Further study needs to be completed in the following areas, overnight toilet training, recognizing the need to use the toilet and requesting it, and making the transition from being toilet timed to toilet trained. As the toilet training program continues, we will work on finding successful solutions to these issues.

Overall Summary of Toilet Training Program Success



Comparison of Total Number of Voids Outside the Toilet Before and After Toilet Training

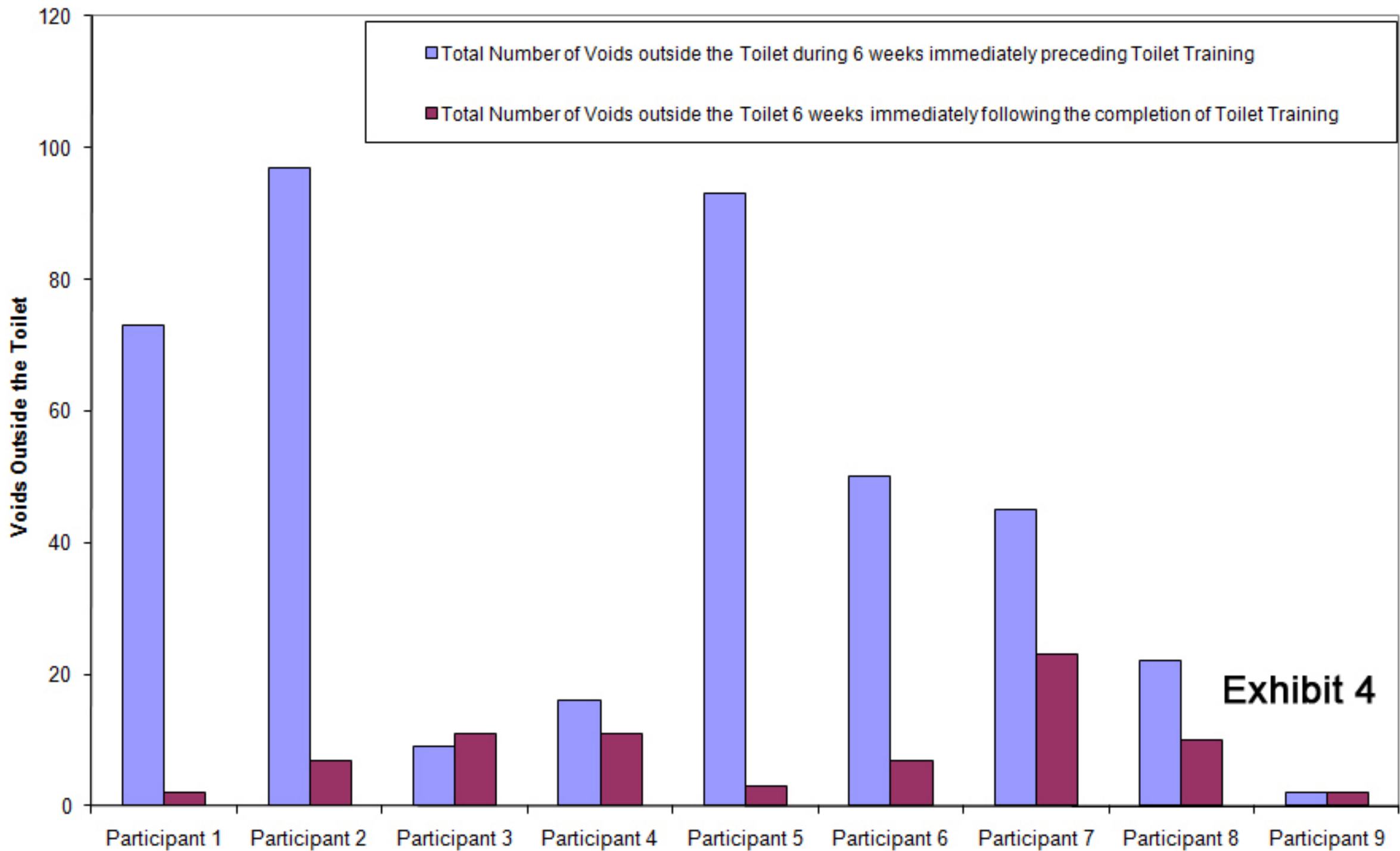
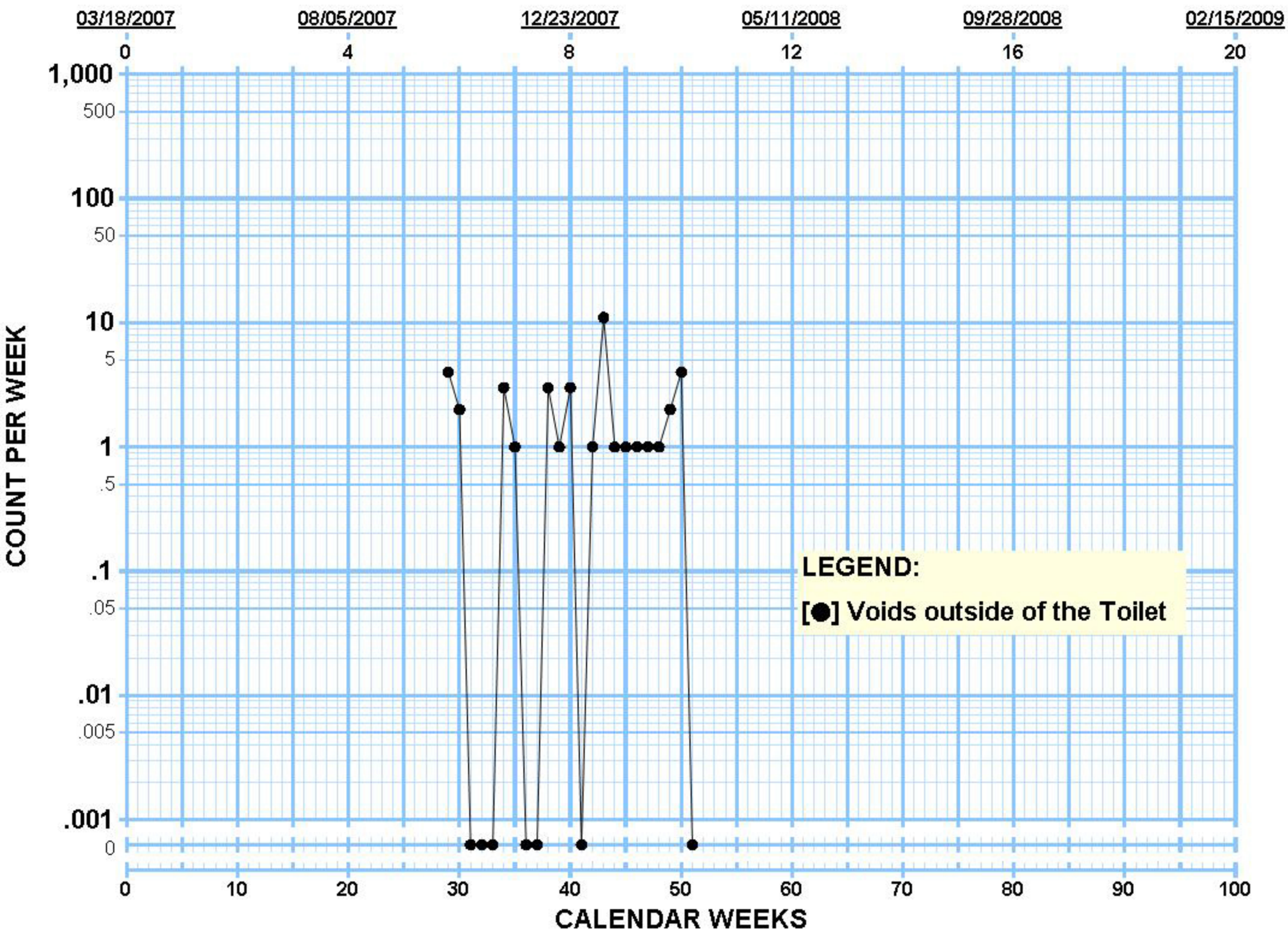
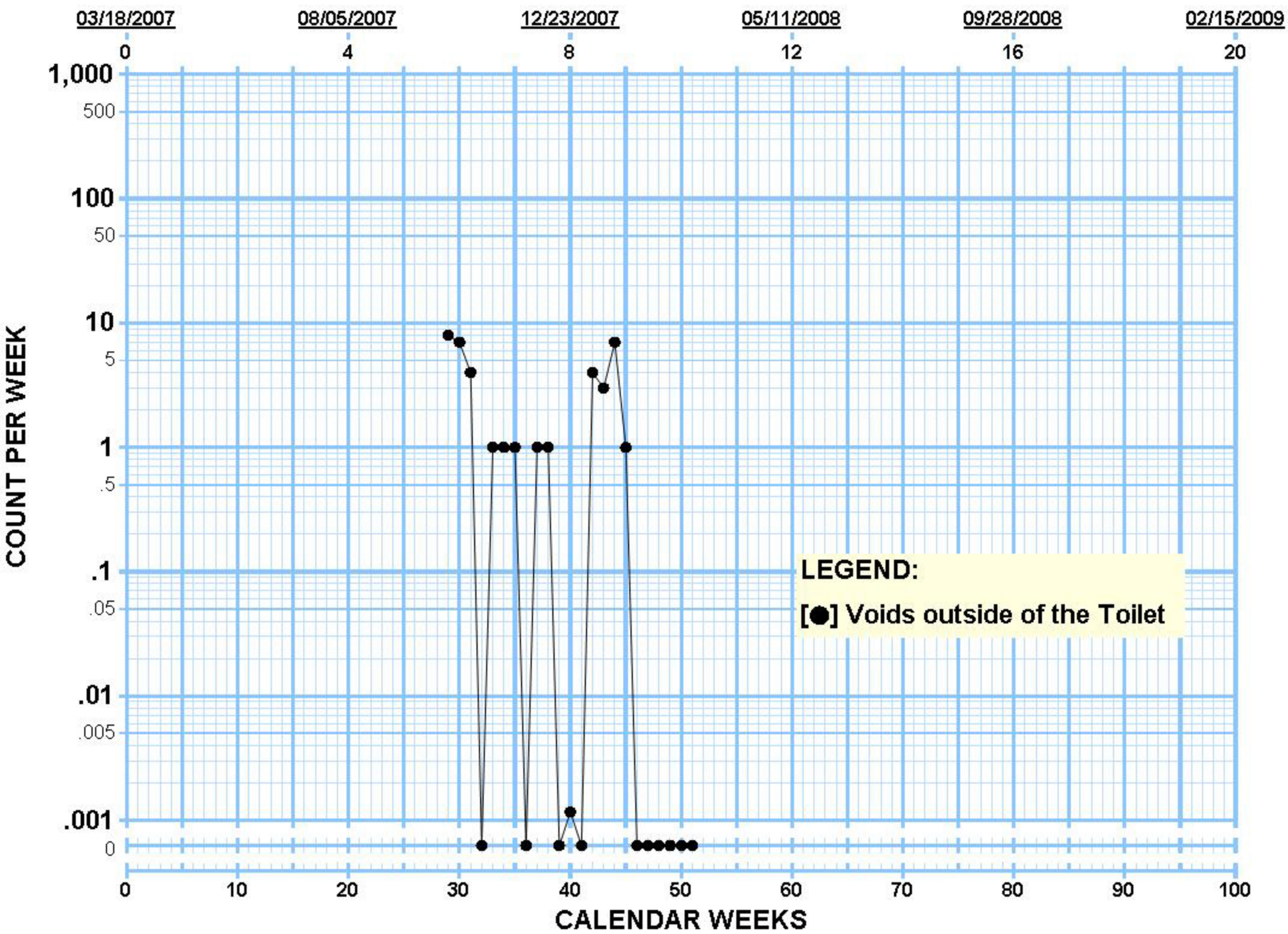


Exhibit 4

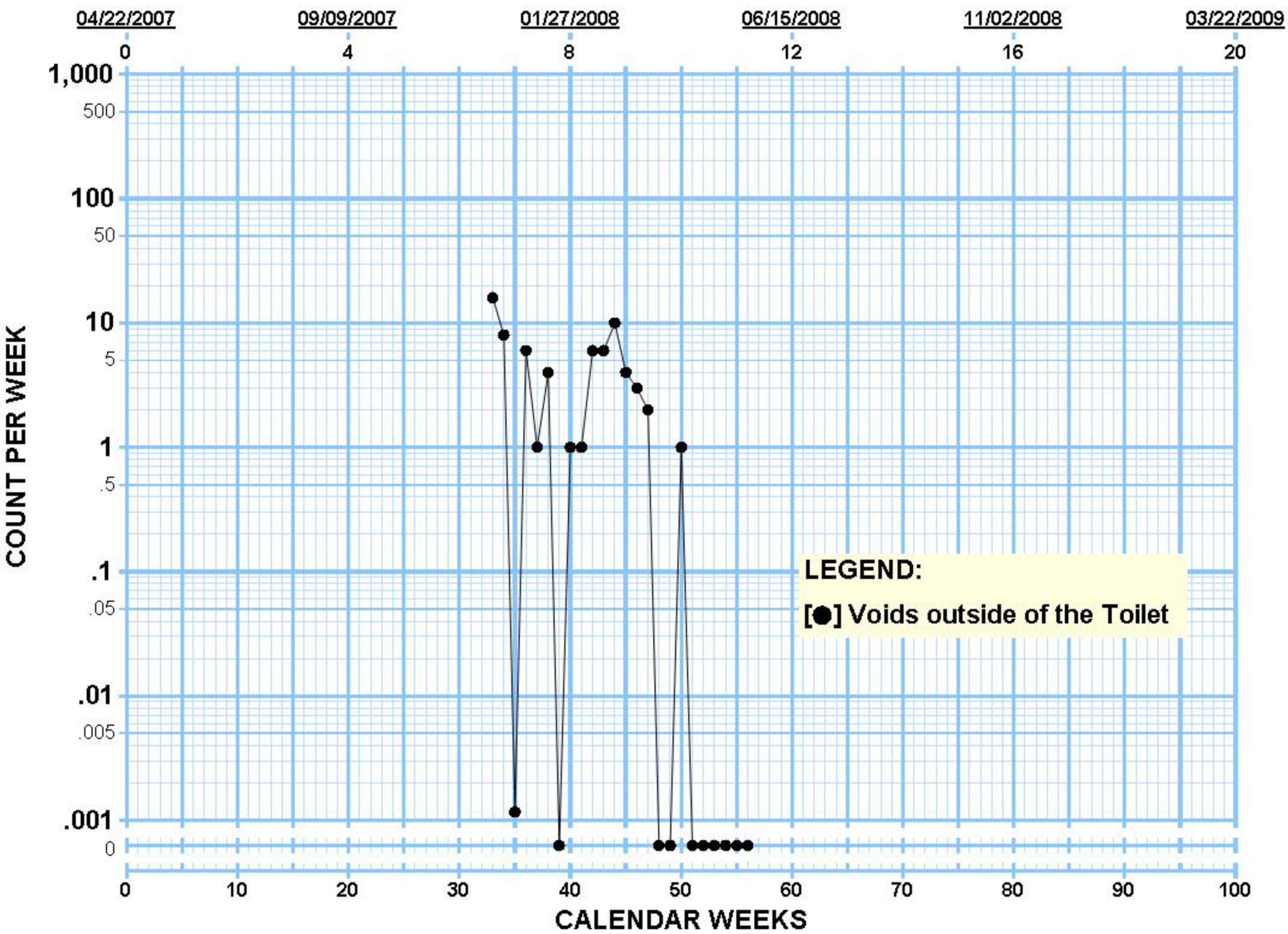
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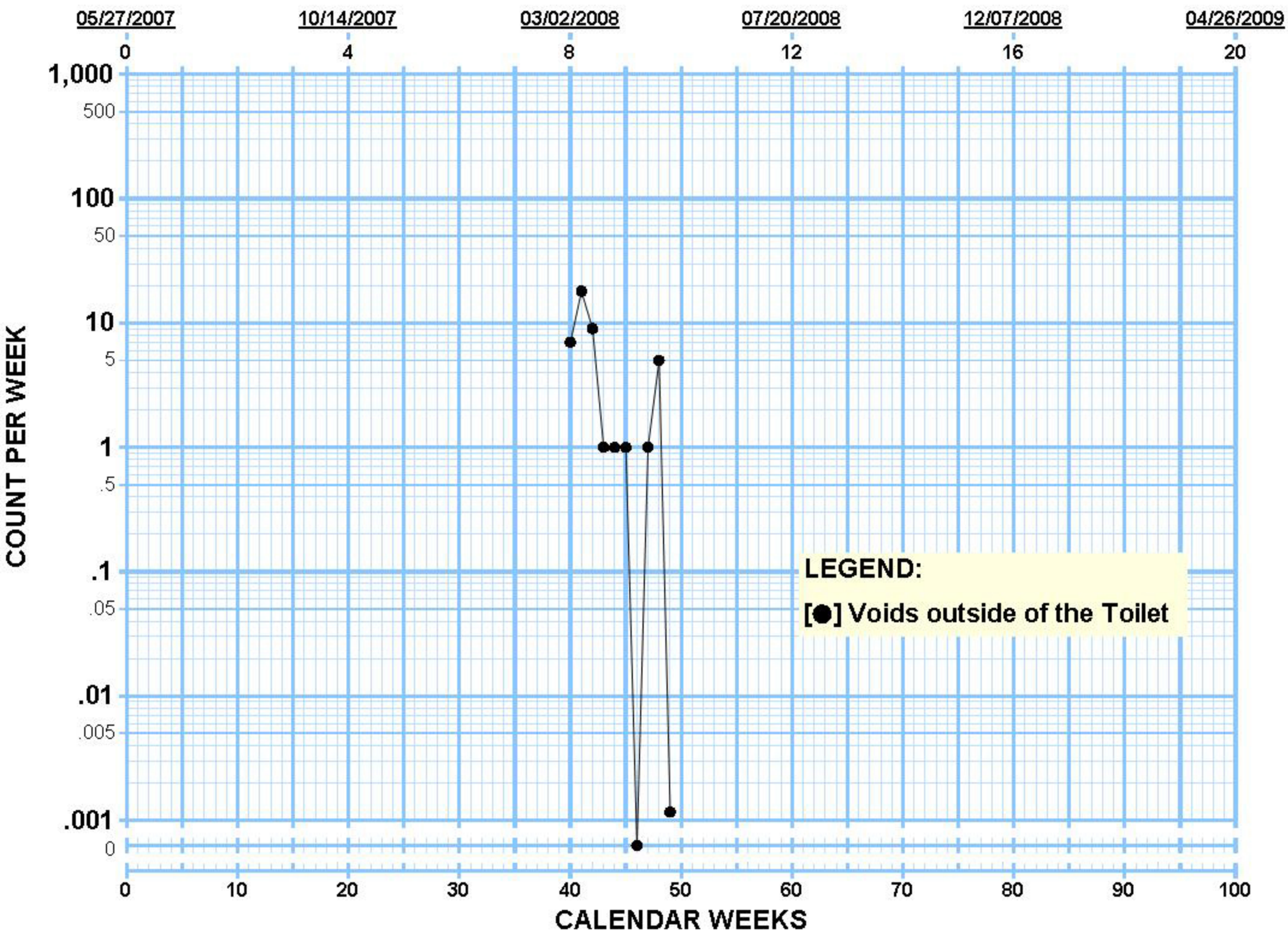
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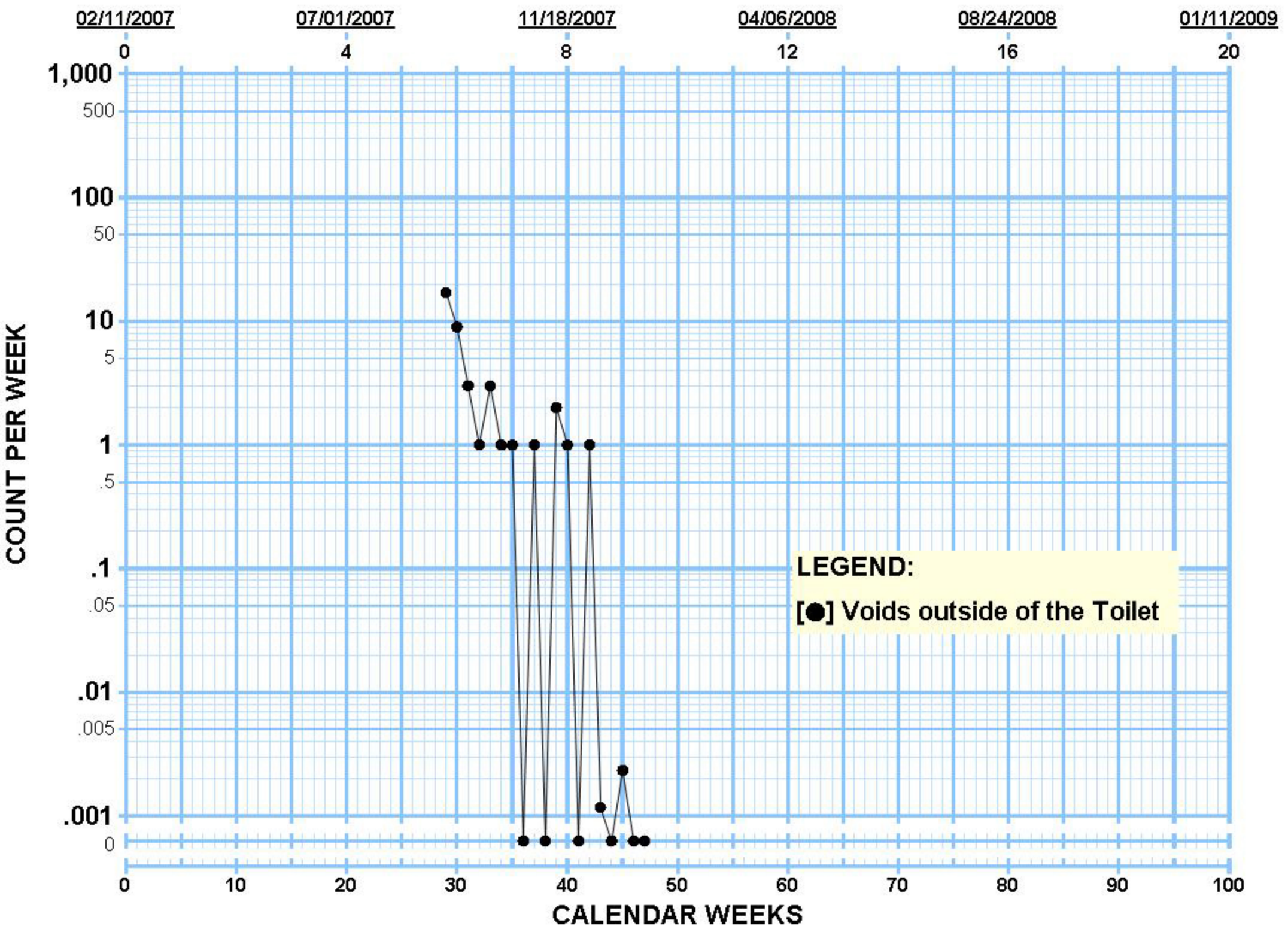
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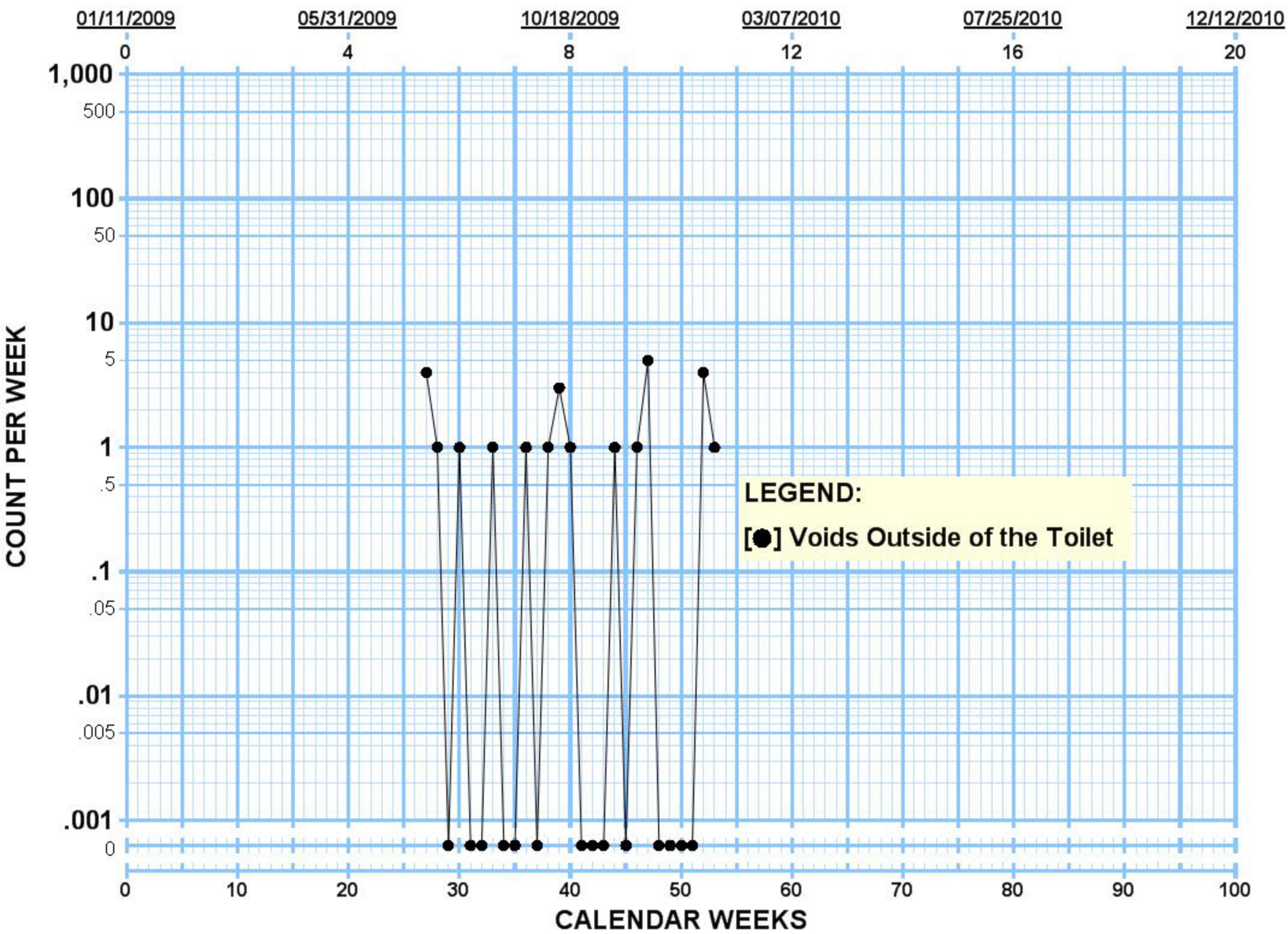
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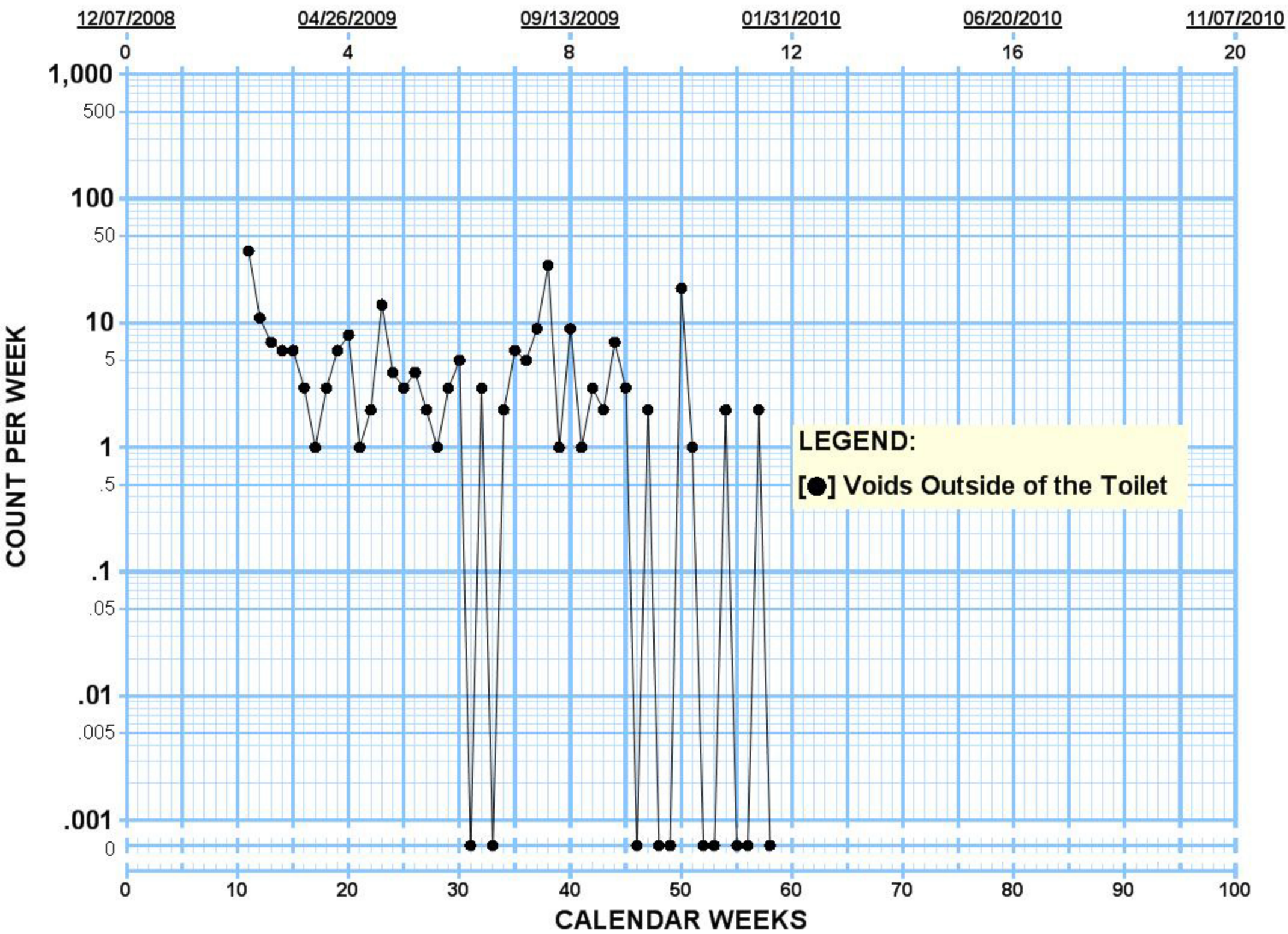
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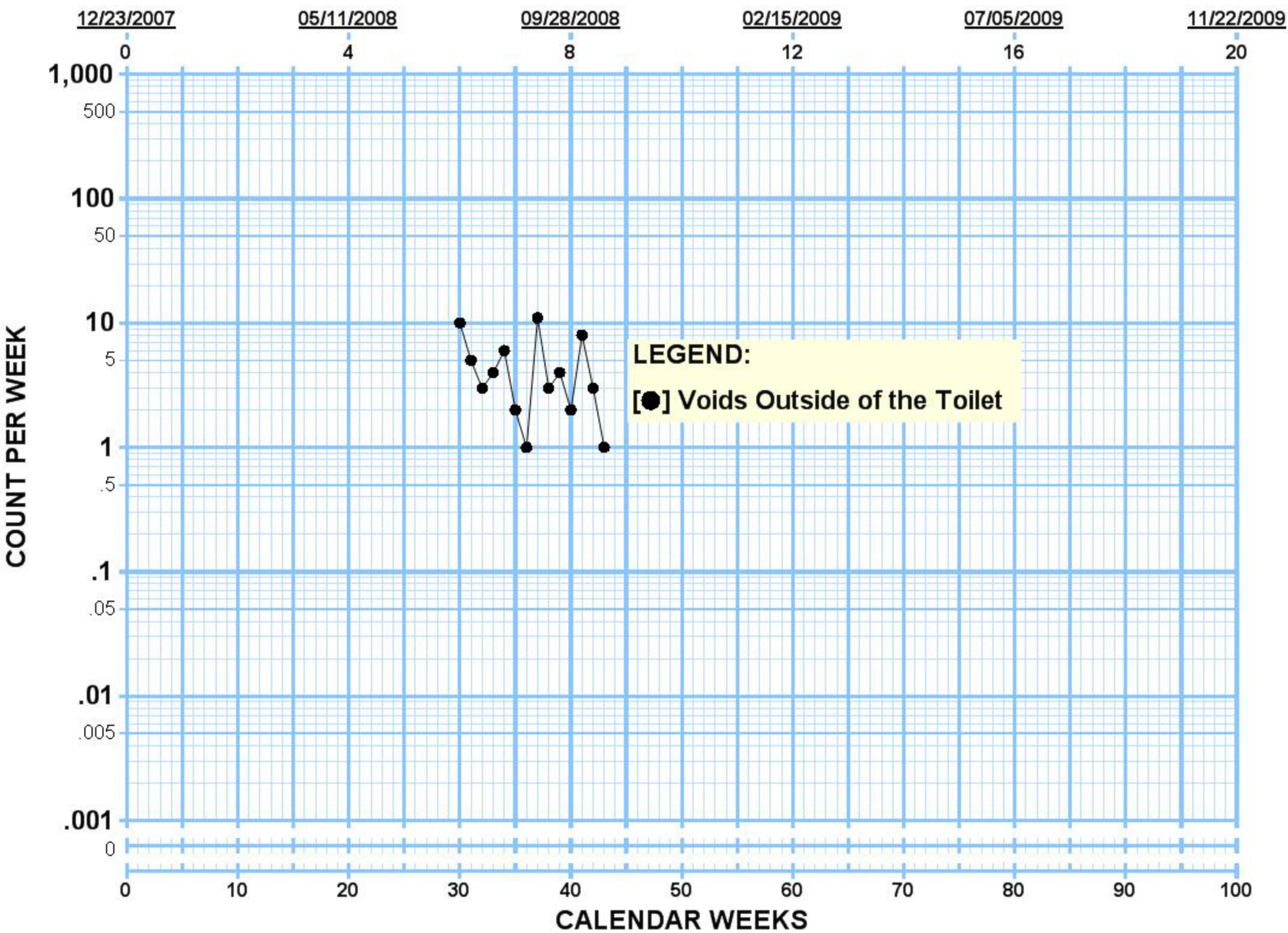
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