

SPORES OF TROUBLE

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ARMORED
COMICS



ARMOR
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Curtis S. Niles

KRÖME™

KROME

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A MEDICAL LABORATORY.

STACHYBOTRYG ATRA SAMPLE NOW IN PLACE.

LET'S BEGIN THE TEST.

OKAY, GENTS-- KEEP YOUR FINGERS CROSSED.

IF THIS WORKS, WE MAY HAVE FOUND A DEFINITIVE CURE FOR STACHYBOTRYOTOXICOSIS.

MOMENTS PASS...

SIGH
NO REACTION
AGAIN.

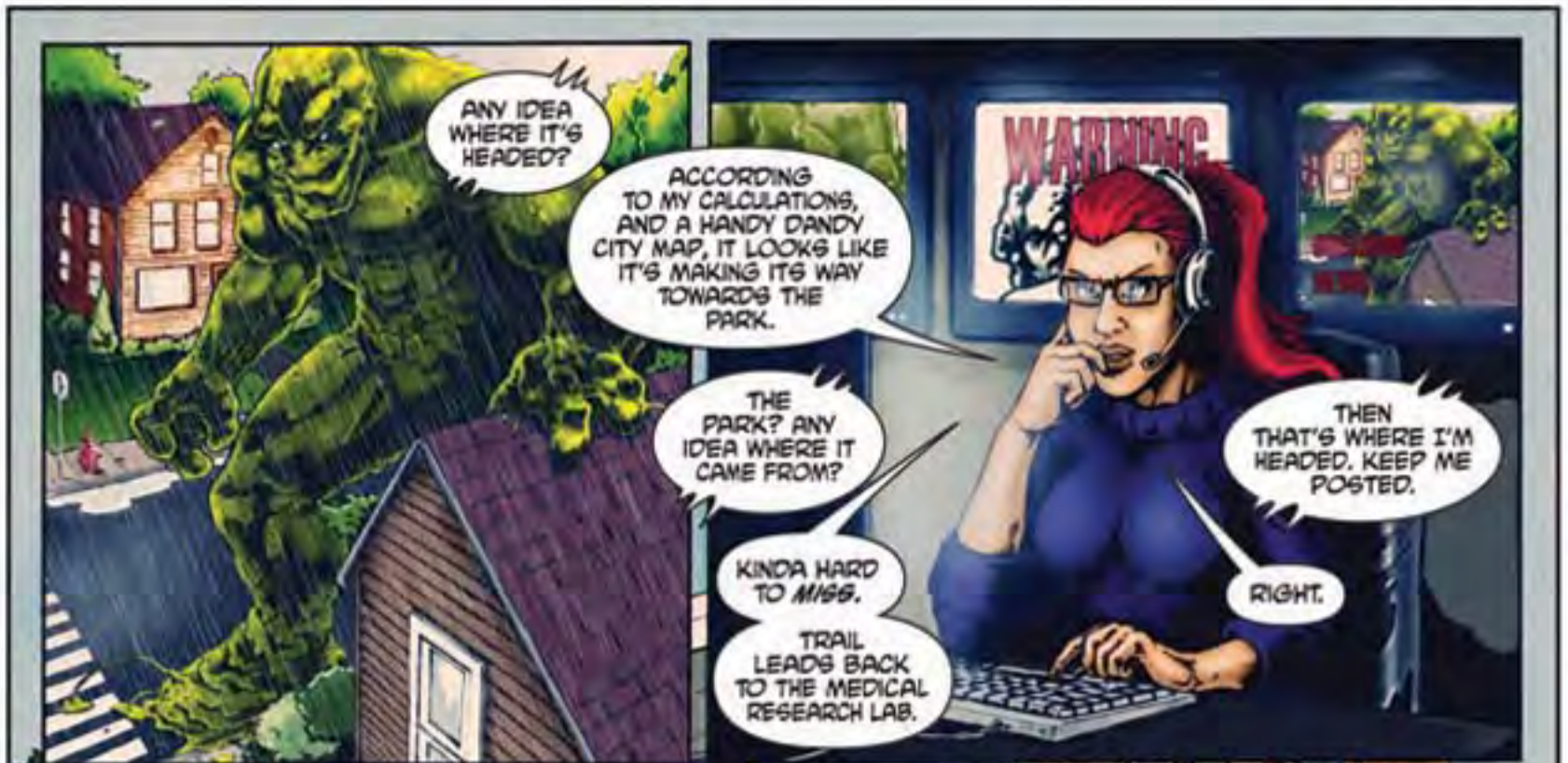
GUESS WE NEED TO TAKE THE WHOLE THING BACK TO FORMULA AND FIGURE OUT WHERE WE WENT WRONG IN OUR CALCULATIONS.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU TWO?

...OH...







ANY IDEA WHERE IT'S HEADED?

ACCORDING TO MY CALCULATIONS, AND A HANDY DANDY CITY MAP, IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S MAKING ITS WAY TOWARDS THE PARK.

THE PARK? ANY IDEA WHERE IT CAME FROM?

KINDA HARD TO MISS.

TRAIL LEADS BACK TO THE MEDICAL RESEARCH LAB.

THEN THAT'S WHERE I'M HEADED. KEEP ME POSTED.

RIGHT.



SOON.

YOU REALLY SHOULDN'T BE HERE.

THERE'S A POSSIBILITY OF MOLD INHALATION AND SICKNESS.



MY SUIT IS HERMETICALLY SEALED WITH ITS OWN OXYGEN SUPPLY.

WHAT EXACTLY WERE YOU WORKING ON HERE?

WE WERE TRYING TO FIND A BETTER CURE FOR STACHYBOTRYOTOXICOSIS, THE DISEASE ASSOCIATED WITH INHALATION OF BLACK MOLD.

IT CAN CAUSE SYMPTOMS RANGING FROM SNEEZING AND RASHES TO MORE SEVERE CASES OF VOMITING AND BLEEDING.

BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!

WHAT METHODS WERE YOU GOING ABOUT FOR THE CURE?

WE THEORIZED THAT BY MUTATING THE STRAIN WE COULD FIND A CHAIN REACTION THAT COULD BREAK DOWN THE ESSENTIAL BASE MOLECULES AND ALLOW US TO DISCERN A TREATMENT.



SPLASH!

SOMEHOW THE MUTATION WENT IN THE OTHER DIRECTION, AND INCREASED THE MOLECULAR STRUCTURE AS WELL AS RESULTING IN SOME KIND OF LIMITED SENTIENCE.



AND ALL THE HUMIDITY FROM THE RAIN WE'VE BEEN HAVING IS WHAT DREW IT OUT OF THE LAB.

CORRECT. IT'S STILL ESSENTIALLY MOLD, IT'S JUST... LARGER.

AND MEANER.



NEW REPORTS SAID IT SETTLED INTO THE LAKE IN THE PARK AND IT SEEMS TO BE ABSORBING THE WATER.

IT'S TAKING IN MORE MOISTURE. THE RAIN APPARENTLY ISN'T... ENOUGH..

KROME? YOU OKAY?

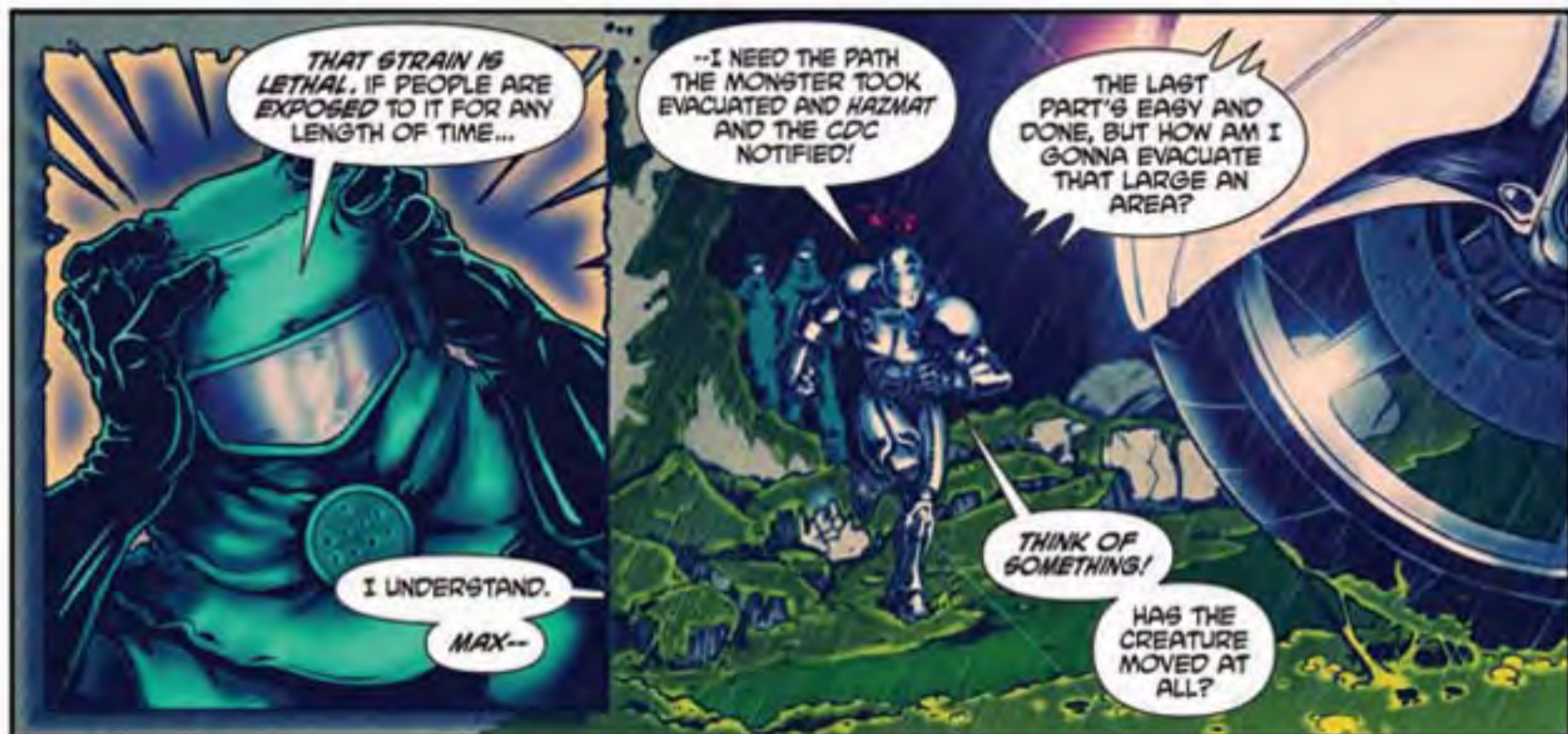


I'LL LET YOU KNOW IN A SECOND.

DOCTOR? COULD YOU COME HERE A MOMENT?



OH NO... THE CREATURE MUST BE EMITTING SPORES. IT'S SPREADING!



THAT STRAIN IS LETHAL. IF PEOPLE ARE EXPOSED TO IT FOR ANY LENGTH OF TIME...

--I NEED THE PATH THE MONSTER TOOK EVACUATED AND HAZMAT AND THE CDC NOTIFIED!

THE LAST PART'S EASY AND DONE, BUT HOW AM I GONNA EVACUATE THAT LARGE AN AREA?

I UNDERSTAND.

MAX--

THINK OF SOMETHING!

HAS THE CREATURE MOVED AT ALL?



STILL IN THE PARK, BUT THE LAKE'S ALMOST GONE.

JUST A FEW KEYSTROKES AND...*DONE!*

HANG ON, JUST THOUGHT OF SOMETHING.

I'VE HACKED INTO THE EMERGENCY BROADCAST SYSTEM.

TARGETING THE AFFECTED AREAS AND...

...THIS IS NOT A TEST. THIS IS AN EMERGENCY. PLEASE EVACUATE YOUR HOMES IN AN ORDERLY FASHION. DO NOT TOUCH OR INHALE ANY OF THE SUBSTANCE YOU SEE ON THE STREET. AGAIN, THIS IS NOT A TEST.



EVACUATION STARTED.

GOOD WORK!

NOTIFY THE COMMISSIONER. TELL HIM I NEED EVERY AVAILABLE OFFICER TO GET EVERY OUNCE OF BLEACH THAT THEY CAN FROM THE SUPERMARKETS NEAR THE CIVIC CENTER REFLECTING POOL, AND DUMP IT IN.

AND FIND ME THE LEAST-INHABITED PATH TO THERE FROM THE PARK.

WELL, THAT SOUNDS...*ODD*. BESIDES, I THINK THE COMMISSIONER'S A BIT BUSY AT THE MOMENT.

HE'LL FIND THE TIME.









A WORD ABOUT MOLD

by Curtis S. Niles, Sr.

I'm told that mold has been around since the beginning of time and I believe it. It has its place in our environment. Mold aids in the breakdown of cellulose and organic matter in nature. No one really notices or cares about what mold does in nature, but when mold finds its way indoors and into our homes to the point where we notice it, now that's a different story... In my work as a Certified Home Inspector, I often run into mold in viable and non-viable forms; viable meaning alive and reproducing, non-viable meaning dormant. There are several species of mold and they all seem to have varying levels of toxicity. Many of them are commonly found indoors, (i.e. *Aspergillus/Penicillium*), while others when found indoors trigger a significant concern, (i.e. *Stachybotrys*). *Stachybotrys* is known to have the highest toxicity levels of the molds studied by scientists.

One thing you must understand about mold is that it is found in virtually every environment, indoors and out, this we cannot control. You must also understand that mold needs a food source to survive. Cellulose products such as paper, wood, and even paint are all food sources that can support mold growth. We build our homes essentially with mold food sources. The only thing that we as home dwellers can control is the last thing essential to support mold, and that is MOISTURE. Moisture is the key component in mold reproduction. If the environment in which we live has mold spores flying around, and we have spores constantly within our environment, there's one only thing we can do to prevent a moldy scenario, and that is to keep the indoor environment dry enough so that mold does not have the last element it needs to reproduce.

Mold does not necessarily need water to thrive. It needs moisture. This moisture may come in forms other than water, such as high relative humidity. If the indoor humidity levels are over 55%, there is a high likelihood for mold to start forming on painted surfaces, paper products, fabrics, and/or wood framing. If there is marginal relative humidity and poor air circulation, mold can be found growing in this environment as well. All that is needed in a poorly ventilated space is an occasional leak, or seepage of water for mold to take shape.

What can you do to keep mold in check?

1. Be sure to keep water where it belongs, in the pipes within the home. Any leaks should be addressed as soon as they are discovered.
2. You should be monitoring plumbing and heating systems for leaks or the formation of condensation.
3. Areas below ground ought to be well conditioned meaning, having an environment similar to the floor spaces above ground.
4. Homeowners should be vigilant about how the water drains away from the home. Water should not be found directed toward the foundation.
5. Be certain to have properly functioning gutters and downspouts with leaders discharging storm water sufficiently away from the foundation.
6. Keep basements and crawlspace windows or vents closed during humid days.
7. Maintain a properly sized operational dehumidifier in spaces below grade such as basements and crawlspaces, particularly if you know the area is generally damp. Remember to drain it or obtain one that has a pump to prevent automatic shutting off of the unit.

The mold monster featured in this issue can be a real monster to some of our readers. Don't let this guy have a chance to grow in your home, but if by chance you do find some evidence of mold in your home, you know who to call!



President: Curtis S. Niles, Sr.
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Curtis S. Niles Sr. has been in the Real Estate Industry since 1994. Prior to Home Inspections, he owned and operated a contracting company, which performed various contracting services from Massachusetts to Maryland. In his company's history he has personally performed every aspect of home improvement/remodeling on all types of homes, from new construction to 100+year old historic homes. This experience provided him with significant, and in-depth knowledge of various types of construction methods. Building upon this background, he began his home inspection career in 1999, and strives to be a leader in his field.

Curtis is committed to Truth, Honesty, and Education as he carries out his various roles as; President of his company, New Inspector Trainer/Mentor, President of NAHI, and Past President (Board of Directors) of the local Southeast NAHI Chapter (NAHIPA). While under his 4-year leadership as President, the NAHIPA chapter earned the coveted NAHI Chapter Award in 2008 for outstanding chapter promotion, membership, and legislative initiative. As Past Chapter President, he was instrumental in the current drafting of the proposed Home Inspector Law currently in the State Legislature. He established his chapter's e-newsletter, and has authored numerous articles in national publications. Curtis is also the 2007 recipient of the NAHI Member of The Year Award, and was elected to the National Board of Directors in 2008. He presently serves NAHI in the office of President, and is the Chairman of NAHI's Marketing committee.

Curtis is also recognized in his area's judicial system as an Expert Witness. He maintains the following licenses/certifications and/or affiliations: Radon measurement by the PA DEP, PA Dept. of Agriculture Certified Pest Technician, PA Licensed Real Estate Agent, Certified Mold Inspector (CMI) by the Environmental Solutions Assoc., Affiliate member of the local Board of Realtors, he is a NAHI Certified Real Estate Inspector (CRI), and is a NAHI Inspector Trainer (NIT).

He is a devoted husband, loving father of five children, an avid motorcyclist, and obviously enjoys comics!

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Want more information? We've put together this list of resources to help you become more familiar with home inspection and the issues that may affect your home. If you'd like more information on any home inspection related topic, feel free to give us a call (610) 352-2212, or visit our website and request more information:

www.armoredhomeinspections.com/Info_Contact.php



MOLD

A Brief Guide to Mold, Moisture, and Your Home - <http://www.epa.gov/mold/moldguide.html>

Ten Things You Should Know About Mold - <http://www.epa.gov/mold/moldresources.html>

INFORMATION FOR CONSUMERS

National Association of Home Inspectors - <http://www.nahi.org>

Pennsylvania Association of Realtors - <http://www.parealtor.org/consumers/>

National Association of Home Builders - <http://www.nahb.org>

US Consumer Product Safety Commission - <http://www.cpsc.gov>

National Association of the Remodeling Industry - <http://www.nari.org>

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

DEP Home Page - http://www.depweb.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/dep_home/5968

Radon Home Page - http://www.dep.state.pa.us/brp/Radon_Division/Radon_Homepage.htm

Public Drinking Water - http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/public_drinking_water/10549

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

US EPA Home Page - <http://www.epa.gov>

Lead - Lead in Paint Dust, and Soil - <http://www.epa.gov/lead>

Lead in Drinking Water - <http://water.epa.gov/drink/info/lead/index.cfm>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

National Cancer Institute Fact Sheet on Asbestos - <http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Risk/Asbestos>

Environmental Solutions Association Consumer Info - <http://www.esaassociation.com/node/4>

Penn State University's Fact Sheet on Termites - <http://ento.psu.edu/extension/factsheets/termites>

New Inspector Training (NAHI_NIT) - http://www.armoredhomeinspections.com/NewInspector_Training.php

