



Sudoku solution from Page 3

29 Pinewood Forest Ct., Ste. 200  
The Woodlands, Texas 77381

www.BAQ1.com

TOLL FREE 866-367-1177

PRST STD  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
BOISE, ID  
PERMIT 411

### Return Service Requested

- 1 Mycotoxins and Magic Elixirs
- 2 Communicate Like an Apple CEO
- 2 All In or Not At All
- 3 Mycotoxins in Commercial Buildings
- 4 Can't Sleep? There's an App for That



## A Bunch of Hooley When Pseudoscience Comes for Mycotoxins

**H**ave you ever walked out of a meeting or a presentation thinking, "What a bunch of hooley!" That's how quite a few of my colleagues felt —not once, but twice! — after attending presentations on mycotoxins at this year's Indoor Air Quality Association (IAQA) Annual Meeting & Expo. Organizers of this event aim to allow only the best people in their respective fields to present, but sometimes things fall short. This past year, two individuals who were supposed to be experts on dealing with mycotoxins and indoor air gave presentations. The only problem? These people were clearly far less educated on mycotoxins than they claimed to be.

“The only way to completely get rid of mycotoxins and protect people with allergies and asthma is to fully remove the mold through proper remediation”



valid, but this doesn't mean every individual will be affected by breathing those toxins.

Here's a brief biology lesson: Mycotoxins are toxins generated by actively growing mold for the purpose of killing other molds so the new mold can grow. Though mycotoxins are meant to kill other molds, there is plenty of evidence suggesting that ingesting mycotoxins can cause liver damage and other health problems in people. Of course, you'll want to remove mycotoxins as soon as possible, and the best and only way to do this is to remove the mold through remediation. It's that simple. Disturbingly, this wasn't the message sent by the presenters at the IAQA Expo.

Adding insult to injury, the other presentation was from a company who claimed you don't have to remove mold in order to eliminate mycotoxins. Their so-called remediation process could save time and money by fogging an infested space with some "magic elixir" — my terminology — to remove mycotoxins without having to go through the process of removing the mold growth. They claimed to be the only company in the country who could effectively remove mycotoxins. Never mind that mycotoxins will come back if there's still mold there to generate toxins. They also ignored the fact that dead mold can be just as dangerous as live mold to people with allergies or asthma.

educated in these fields to spot such imposters, but I'm concerned about regular people who haven't spent years in the industry.

I understand why these people with their pseudoscience would sound appealing to homeowners or property managers. If a building has a major mold problem, it can cost \$30,000 to remove the mold properly and repair the damage done. So if someone comes along claiming that mycotoxins are the real problem and that their magic elixir can get rid of the mycotoxins for just \$8,000, then that sounds like a good deal. But this smoke and mirrors is an extreme disservice to people and can cause more harm in the long run. I don't know how these people were allowed to speak at the IAQA Expo, but I hope they aren't invited back.

Here's the bottom line: The only way to completely get rid of mycotoxins and protect people with allergies and asthma is to fully remove the mold through proper remediation.

*Train West*

I didn't waste my time in these presentations myself, but my colleagues who did attend them told me how one presenter insisted that breathing in mycotoxins is just as dangerous as ingesting them. This is a huge stretch. This presenter didn't seem to realize that there's no peer-reviewed scientific research to prove this connection. Now, there is anecdotal evidence. Some people report feeling unwell after entering a house infested with stachybotrys. Certainly, these people's responses are

for you. This award-winning application was named the World's Happiest App by Timewell and has helped thousands of people de-stress since it came online in 2012. Though it's perhaps best known for its meditations, the app also has a library of "Sleep Stories" for adults and kids alike, many read by famous voices like Matthew McConaughey, Stephen Fry, and Alan Sklar. Head to Calm.com to browse the library or download the app from the Apple App Store or Google Play.

Good luck, and sweet dreams!

## Can't Sleep? THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT

On Sunday, June 20, the sun will stay up in Alaska until almost midnight, longer than any other day of the year. That's because June 20 is the summer solstice, the day when one of the Earth's poles is tilted so drastically toward the sun that light hits our whole hemisphere for a few extra hours. It's a beautiful phenomenon, but it can also be disruptive — particularly if you're trying to sleep.

Life has already thrown a lot of stressors at us over the last six months, so if the extra daylight is the icing on the cake of your insomnia, it might be time to turn to your smartphone for some high-tech help. These two innovative apps can help you get your eight hours in spite of mother nature's curveballs.

### Pzizz: Wander Scientifically-based 'Dreamscapes'

Step aside, white noise machines: Pzizz is here to take background noise to the next level.

Instead of simply playing ocean sounds or chirping birds to help you doze off, this app relies on a branch of psychology called "psychoacoustics" for its custom sound blends. Its researchers combine ambient sounds with narration to create "dreamscapes" tailored to different points in your sleep cycle. It's a well-thought-out product with a clinical trial under its belt. Head to Pzizz.com to learn more or download the app through the Apple App Store or Google Play for a seven-day free trial.

### Calm: Have a Celebrity Read You a Bedtime Story

If you've been feeling nostalgic for the bedtime stories of your childhood, then Calm is the app



## Lessons in Communication From Tim Cook

In the third quarter of 2019, Apple's quarterly report showed an unexpected slip in profits. Even iPhone revenue had slipped. But instead of taking a bad hit, Apple's stocks spiked higher after the report was released. Why? Apple CEO Tim Cook used five magic words.

Knowing how to successfully talk about your business is key to continued success. You know your work better than anyone else, so you know if things are going well or if you need to course-correct. However, the outside perspective doesn't always match the reality of the situation. If someone comes in with concerns or outright anger because of what they think the situation is, you need to reframe the conversation and quickly show them the bigger picture. Tim Cook does this with the simple phrase, "The way I see it ..."

When addressing concerns about Apple's dip in profits, Cook took control of the narrative and presented the message he wanted people to focus on: Apple's record service growth.

"The way I see it," Cook said, "we had the strongest hardware portfolio ever. We've got new products on the way. The pipeline is full of great new stuff on the product and the services side. We're very fortunate and have worked very hard to have loyal customers ... The installed base is growing — hit a new record. That's obviously a good thing. And we've got the wearables area that is doing extremely well!"

Suddenly, investors weren't worried about the iPhone anymore because Cook reminded them that Apple's wearables and services alone were close to a Fortune 500 company. Cook provided important context about his company by taking control of the conversation.

Controlling the conversation is how leaders steer their teams through stormy weather. They pair their deep knowledge of the business with effective communication skills so people understand the bigger picture and aren't hung up on details that only show half the story. Keep in mind that leaders like Cook don't mislead people with false or exaggerated information. They stick to what's true while reframing it in a way so outsiders will better understand. If you need to reframe the situation or explain some complicated aspect of your business, start with the magic words: "The way I see it ..."



# INDUSTRY WHO'S WHO

## Updates from the IAQA President

Recently the Indoor Air Quality Association (IAQA) experienced some big changes. The IAQA is in the process of splitting from the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) and becoming an independent association. This month, we spoke with IAQA president, Jay M. Stake, about where he sees the industry and the association going. Stake has been a member of IAQA for over 20 years. After experiencing frustration with how things were being mismanaged in the association, Stake stepped up to become IAQA president in 2018.

"You're either part of the problem or part of the solution," Stake says. "In the last few years, we lost sight of where we were going. When I became president, my goal was to change management companies and to provide

a bigger return on investment to our members. Things have been going excellent. We held our first stand-alone conference in 16 years, almost doubling our attendance from last year. More importantly, we're taking our education back. We'll soon be offering the CIE and CIEC course and the CMR course again, which we haven't offered in many years. We're going to keep expanding our education."

Making these changes calls for a huge commitment, something Stake is no stranger to. Even before becoming president of the IAQA, he was an active member of the organization. At one point, he was on every committee the IAQA had. He even helped write important standards and protocols as the vice-chairman of the Indoor Environmental Standards Organization.

"I feel that you should give everything to an association if you belong to it," Stake explains. "You either give 150% or you don't give at all. That's just the way I am. As President Teddy Roosevelt once said, 'Every man owes a part of his time and money to the business or industry in which he is engaged. No man has the moral right to withhold his support from an organization that is striving to improve conditions within his sphere.' That's how it should be."

As president, Stake aims to bring the IAQA back to where the association used to be, home to several thousand members and at the center of all education in the industry. It's a tall order, but when you set out to make a change, you should be willing to go all in. With Jay Stake at the helm, the future of the IAQA is looking bright.

"You're either part of the problem or part of the solution," Stake says.

## DON'T BE HOODWINKED!

### What Building Owners Need to Know About Mycotoxins

With a number of unsavory individuals overselling their expertise about mycotoxins, this month we want to educate our readers on this topic. Here's what building owners need to know about mycotoxins, including their potential danger to humans and the best way to remove mycotoxins from your building.

#### Why are there mycotoxins in my building?

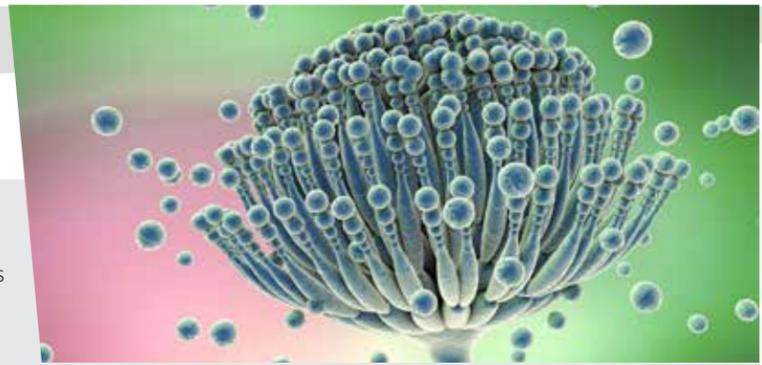
If you have mycotoxins in your building, then it means you have mold, which means you also have excess moisture somewhere. Mycotoxins are toxins generated by certain species of mold for the purpose of removing other molds from the area. If there's a chronic water leak in the corner of a room, then certain molds will grow first. These are called "first colonizers." If that space remains wet enough for a long enough period of time, then other opportunistic molds will occur.

We usually see *Stachybotrys chartarum*, commonly known as black mold. Since *Stachybotrys* also generates mycotoxins, people will often call it "toxic black mold." This name sounds more serious than the mold usually is. The toxins *Stachybotrys* creates are designed to kill first colonizer molds so the *Stachybotrys* can invade that real estate. If you have mycotoxins in your building, then you probably have a serious mold problem that's been lingering for a while.

#### Are mycotoxins harmful to humans?

If you have mold in your building, then there are probably mycotoxins in the air. As mentioned in our cover article, though there is some anecdotal evidence that claims that some individuals have suffered ill effects after inhaling or touching mycotoxins, there is no scientific research that suggests inhalation or dermal exposure to mycotoxins is dangerous. However, if ingested, mycotoxins can be incredibly harmful.

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that "the effects of some food-borne mycotoxins are acute with symptoms of severe illness



appearing quickly after consumption of food products contaminated with mycotoxins. Other mycotoxins occurring in food have been linked to long-term effects on health, including the induction of cancers and immune deficiency." While mycotoxins generated by mold in your building can be a potential problem, mycotoxins are far more dangerous when generated by mold in your food. Humans can ingest mycotoxins by eating molding food, or by drinking milk from an animal that ate contaminated feed.

#### How can I prevent mycotoxins from infesting my building?

The only way to prevent mycotoxins is to prevent mold growth. The best way to prevent mold growth is through moisture control.

- Fix leaks in your building as soon as they're discovered.
- Watch for condensation or wet spots and identify the source of the moisture problem.
- Maintain low indoor humidity — ideally 30–50% relative humidity — to help prevent condensation.
- Keep heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) drip pans clean and unobstructed.
- Perform regular building/HVAC inspections and maintenance.

#### How do I get rid of mycotoxins?

The only way to remove mycotoxins is through proper mold remediation. If you fail to remove the mold from your building, then the mycotoxins will return.

Mycotoxins are not the biggest threat of mold growth, but their presence shouldn't be ignored. As with all areas of indoor air quality, mycotoxins should be addressed quickly and dealt with by experienced professionals.

# SUDOKU

## HAVE A LAUGH WITH TRAVIS



7	5				6	3	
2	3		7	5		1	
	1			3	5	4	
					2		
		3			8	7	
	7	8		6			
			6	7	1	8	
3				2	1	4	
			3			2	9