

Mold in the city

By An Affected Cheyenne Resident

My husband and I rented a place here in Cheyenne's westside, on Wednesday September 20, 2006. We paid our deposit, were given the key and were going to paint and clean it (it **was** filthy) until our move in date of 10/1/06.

We were staying at a friend's house until then as we had just moved back up here from New Mexico, and stayed with him while looking for a place to rent. My husband had already found a job, so we were planning to paint evenings and on weekends. We began painting on Friday September 22. We painted the bathroom first.

By the time we returned to our friend's I was vomiting. We painted the bedroom the next day and there was no vomiting so I assumed that it was just a combination of the paint fumes and poor ventilation in the bathroom. On Sunday, September 24, we started to paint the living room and I started vomiting again. I went over by myself on the following Monday while my husband was at work - to do the trim.

I pulled back the carpet from the wall which separated the living room and the bathroom, and discovered that the back of the carpet was covered in mold. It was in the corner so I cut out a triangle and figured I would replace it because we were going to put in a new floor covering in the foyer anyway as the carpet was ratty over by the door, and I didn't want to be tracking in dirt and snow come winter.

I was still vomiting and it was getting worse each day. But, we spent close to a week working on the living room. On the 29th of September, one week after we started painting, I was so dehydrated and sick I asked my husband to take me to the hospital emergency room when I picked him up from work. There they told me that my potassium level was almost nonexistent, so they hung two bottles of potassium piggyback and ran them wide open along with the IV fluids they had started.

I was so dehydrated that I had lost about 15 lbs in the past week and looked very gaunt. The Doctor said that if I had waited till the following morning, I most likely would not be there as potassium is a necessity for heart function and I would have gone into arrhythmia and my heart would have stopped and I would have died in my sleep.

They were also giving me IV Ulcer meds to stop my pain and vomiting. X-rays and lab work were done because they could not determine **why** I was vomiting.

The lab work showed infection and the x-ray showed a cloud close to my appendix, so they thought appendicitis. A CAT Scan was ordered to get a better look. The results from that showed that there was a small mass at my appendix and a larger one in my lower-mid abdomen. Also, the portal vein coming off my liver was distended and bulging.

The Doctor called in two surgeons and started getting ready for surgery as the ballooning of that vein is comparable to an aneurysm. If an aneurysm bursts you are **dead** in fifteen minutes.

The Gastroenterologist came in to see me, but he wanted to wait so I could go into his office on Monday and have an Enteroscopy and schedule surgery for both. Surgery was needed but not on an emergency basis. The other surgeon said the large abdominal mass was not life-threatening. I was to make an appointment at her office for Monday and we would schedule a biopsy. I was dismissed with prescriptions and went back to our friend's where I slept and lounged for two days and recovered my strength.

On Sunday, October 1, which was our move-in date, we went over and started the foyer. When we cut out that piece of carpet - guess what - more mold. My husband finished the tile and we went to bed and he went to work on Monday, the Second. I finished up the lower painting in the living room and when he got home, he did the ceiling. On Tuesday, we started tearing out the carpet as we had found mold in two places.

In hindsight, I wish I had saved that carpet as evidence for the now ensuing court case, but I didn't. I had dumpstered it. We removed the floor covering all the way down to bare concrete which I mopped daily with almost pure bleach because I was still smelling mold even though the carpet was gone.

That weekend, October 7th, my best friend, who is also a Doctor (DCM & DVM) came to Cheyenne as she was also moving and we wanted to get together before she left and she wanted to see my new place. She had brought a sterile petri dish to test - as I had mentioned my terrible coughing since we had moved in. She spent the weekend, took a specimen from me, and also tested the access space and went home on Sunday.

She called me on Monday to give me the results, which pointed to Toxic Mold in my lungs. The results for the access space also was positive. She said to keep coughing it up or I'd have Static Pneumonia also.

In the meantime, I began calling around here to get help and testing as to source and amount of mold. Well, that proved interesting. My list of calls and referrals is eight pages long. I finally got the EPA guy for the City and County Health Department. He has no testing equipment. So I'm still calling people.

I think I will try to get someone from the University of Wyoming in Laramie, or have someone come up from Colorado. Maybe they have test equipment.

As of this past Friday, November 24, I received a **Notice To Quit** from the owner. Of course, I am not just going to move so he can re-rent this place and make someone else ill. I have been in contact with the Wyoming Attorney General's office since my first round of calls.

All I can tell you is, before I relocate, I will have place tested for mold before we even begin moving in. And you should, too! Especially, if you are moving into an older rental.

And **BEWARE!** You never know what is lurking in the walls, or under the carpet - in this case it was **DEATH!!!**

I am not mad at my owner, I am mad that my health has been destroyed by just moving into his place. I am a Naturopathic Doctor (ND) and very healthy, make that **WAS** very healthy! **BEWARE!**

Add: Phone calls were made to: The Wyoming Attorney General's office, Cheyenne Housing Authority, Wyoming Legal Services, Wyoming Senior Citizen's, AARP, State Department of Health, City/County Health Department, Chamber of Commerce, Board of Realtors, University of Wyoming, Trader's, Cheyenne Herald, Wyoming Tribune-Eagle, Warren Sentinel, the Medical Departments at CU in Boulder, Texas A&M in San Marcos, University of Texas, Texas Tech, Brown University, and three local doctors in various specialties.

Writer bio: She has served as editor of the San Saba (Texas) News & Star. She has worked as a proofreader in New Mexico and has published three books - two poetry collections and one cook book. She received her ND in 2000 and passed the national boards in 2001. She is nationally registered and licensed in the field.

Editor's notes: I am not seeking and have not been accepting contributions from new writers and initially was not planning to publish this one. But this is not an opinion piece as the others offered have been - and God knows there are enough opinions in Cheyenne to go around - but was a story written about a personal experience which could affect many others. We have written about black mold (stachybutrus) in the past and the subject seems little understood and less covered. Gilchrist School has been a known source of the problem and a dormitory at Eastern Wyoming Community College in Torrington was abandoned and torn down as a result of mold. This piece, then, is offered in the interest of public health. As the writer cautions, beware.

Recreation Center

It has long been the position of this local advocacy journal to "dance with the one who brung ya."

In political campaigns I have run, candidates have always endorsed the ideas of providing for those already living in Cheyenne and paying as much attention to those businesses already operating here as those being recruited.

Using those as campaign slogans were one thing - doing them once elected has proven to be quite another.

My position has been: Concentrate on a recreation center for residents before addressing a convention center for visiting businesses.

I support, and I have always supported, the notion of building a rec center. I have not supported city government selling off assets to pay for these projects but I'm not too lathered up about them doing that in this case. I would rather see them sell the downtown parking garage. If it is making the kind of profit they claim, it should be an easy asset to sell. Ditto the Civic Center. Sell both.

I agree with the Tribune-Eagle on this one. Design and build it right from the beginning. Do not scrimp on amenities. The City could save hundreds of thousands of dollars by limiting the design and architectural fees paid to their friends. They must also know how they're going to cover the operating shortfall that is certain.

Criticisms aside, a rec center for local families (including county residents) is a wise amenity. This group has wasted much money. A wise investment would most welcome. It is long overdue.

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