



Youth of Today
Hope of Tomorrow



Chicago is Ranked the City with the Most Rats



Ruby George
Cele Middle School

Most cities around the U.S have rats running around the streets, it's normal. But the windy city Chicago has topped the list of rattiest cities in America for the sixth year in a row. Orkin, an Atlanta-based pest control service, ranks US cities based on the number of new rodent treatments from September 1 to August 31 of each year. The result is a list of 50 cities, with most changing spots each time the list is updated. Chicago, however, is still number one.

"Rodents are experts at sniffing out food and shelter, and they're resilient in their ways to obtain both," Ben Hottel, an Orkin entomologist, said in the company's press release. "Residential properties offer the ideal habitat for ro-

dents, and once they've settled in, they're capable of reproducing rapidly and in large quantities." Efforts to tame the city's rat population have been going on for years. Chicago's "war on rats" escalated with the introduction of a new rat task force back in 2016. Residents had even begun adopting cats to squash their numbers. Rounding out the top 10 on Orkin's list were Los Angeles, New York, Washington, DC, San Francisco, Detroit, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Denver and Minneapolis.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has an entire section on its website devoted to rodent control.

"Community-wide closures have led to a decrease in food available to rodents, especially in dense commercial areas," according to the website. "Some jurisdictions have reported an increase in rodent activity as rodents search for new sources of food." And Orkin warns that rat activity "will only continue increasing" as rodents begin seeking warm shelter as the months get colder. Chicago may not be the only city in trouble. Rankings for other cities on Orkin's "rattiest cities" list can be found on the company's website.

Life as the Oldest Sibling



Zoey King
Idea Montopolis

My life as the oldest sibling is nice I have some advantages and disadvantages. Some advantages are: I can make myself a meal while my siblings have to receive help. I can hide something from them above their height. I have my own room, and not having hand me downs. I get to teach them new things. For example, I

taught my sister how ride a bike and play video games. I get to see them grow for example I trained my baby brother to walk and I watch videos of me and my second oldest sibling playing together as babies.

Another advantage is I give them useful advice. Most of the time when we play I'm the leader in our games. At school I walk them to their classes. Some of the disadvantages are: sometimes I have to be responsible for my siblings, I don't have much time to myself. And if I make myself food they want some. My sisters always borrow my clothing. Right after I clean my room they come in and mess it up. And they always want to know what I'm doing. Overall, I love my siblings very much and enjoy being the oldest sibling.

Who Needs a Flu Shot?

Austin, Texas – Austin Public Health (APH) is hosting a walk-up flu shot event on Saturday, Oct. 24, 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Southeast Branch Library, 5803 Nuckols Crossing Road.

The event will distribute approximately 200 flu shots, which will be available on a first-come, first-served basis with priority for those who are uninsured.

The Oct. 24 event will be the first of two flu shot events, with the second operating as a drive-thru event on Nov. 7, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Travis County Expo Center, which will distribute approximately 600 flu shots. Both events are serving as practice for distributing a future COVID-19 vaccine.

The Opioid Crisis



Tyler Allen
LBJ High School

There is a serious crisis facing America. Yet few realize it. Some refer to it as an epidemic. This epidemic kills 175 Americans each day. From 1999-2017 this epidemic killed more Americans than all the wars of the 20th Century.

This crisis is caused by opioids. We need to stop this problem. Most young Americans know very little about opioids. You might ask just what are opioids.

Opioids are drugs synthetically derived from the poppy plant. Most Opioids are prescription painkillers. The use of opium in medicine has been around a long time. The ancient Egyptian used opium for pain.

The problem with this medicine is its misuse. This pain medicine or drug acts on the nervous system. Continued use or misuse can lead to physical dependence and withdrawal. These drugs work by lowering the number of pain signals your body sends to

your brain. They also change how your brain responds to pain.

Opioid medication at a low dosage tends to make you feel sleepy but rather high higher dosage can slow your breathing and heart rate which can lead to death. The feeling of pleasure that results from taking an opioid can make you want to continue to experience those feeling which may lead to addiction. We must remember that these drugs only muffle the pain. They don't eliminate what is causing the pain. The pain is still there you just don't realize it.

Almost half of the opioid deaths in the U.S.A. involve prescription opioids. It must be noted that before 1990 most doctors avoid prescribing opioids for chronic (long term), non-causing pain such as lower back pain because of concern for possible cocaine addiction.

I researched the problem from many different websites. They agree that illegal and misuse will continue. But the benefit, They state it is very important to the medical field.

This problem needs to stop. FDA Commissioner David Kessler stated "to recover from the opioid epidemic, the nation must change the way it looks at opioids. It was stated that from 1999 to 2014 the sale of prescription painkillers in the U.S.A. nearly quadrupled and overdose deaths also quadrupled.

Frederick Douglass, An American Hero



Kaitlyn Cannon
Bluebonnet Trail Elem.

Known to be the Father of Civil Rights Movement, indicates how much beating, belittling, and human disregard Frederick Douglass and other slaves experienced. He was born a slave February 1817, owned by plantation owner, Captain Aaron Anthony, who considered human slaves the same value as horses, pigs and cows.

Desiring to know his correct birthday, he wanted to ask the slave owner, "Old Master", but was told by his loving grandmother, "you will ask no one, you are a slave and slaves don't need birthdays!". Frederick was the baby from a black woman and a white father. His birth name was Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey. His mother, also owned by the Old Master, was sent away after his birth, which meant that he hardly re-

membered her at all. The Old Master sent Frederick to his Grandmother Bailey to live with her until he became twelve, old enough to work the cotton fields and keep the masters' living quarters clean. At the end of their workday, Frederick and his grandmother returned to their tumble-down shack, with bare earth floor and no windows.

At sixteen he was determined to not only seek freedom for himself and grandmother, he wanted to seek freedom all slaves. He suffered beatings for learning how to read and write. The south was holding on to human beings, to beat slaves for no cause. Frederick desired a better life for all slaves. His escaping at night to the north to Rochester, New York was rewarding. Eventually, with great determination, persistence, and help from others who supported The North Star movement, with publishing of the "NorthStar Newspaper" slamming slavery in the south, were priceless human gifts. Women's rights also became a public issue.

Mr. Douglass was most famous for seeking slavery before and after the Civil War. He became one of the most famous men in America as an abolitionist, Social Reformer, Orator, Writer. He became a freed man September 3, 1838.

Almost Time for the Holiday Season



Rebekah McNeal
Round Rock H. S.

Now is about the time that the major holidays are coming around! Although I've never been remarkably enthusiastic about any holiday, I'm looking forward to Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas within the next few months.

I have not trick-or-treated consistently every year since I was little. The last time was a couple of years ago. It's not that I don't like the Fall or free candy. I never have a costume to wear. But if necessary, I'm the queen of making creative costumes on Halloween day. Whether I do or don't go trick-or-treating this year, I'll make sure to pick up the cute cookies and cupcakes on

sale after Halloween!

I'm ready to enjoy my favorite Thanksgiving foods! I look forward to my mom's delicious dressing. It's the best! I know everyone says that about their own mother's dressing, but that is the most accurate way to explain it! This year I'm going to be in charge of cooking everything, except for a couple of desserts. I'm sure I'll manage even though that sounds a bit overwhelming. My mom will teach me as I go. I can not wait to make my Dutch apple pie and make some amazing monkey bread.

For as long as I could, I tried to stop my mom from putting up the Christmas tree. The tree is up and now fully decorated. I even have a mini, decorated tree on my desk. She has finished Christmas shopping and wrapping gifts for my whole family. I am eager to see what I got!

Sooner or later, people will be busting through the grocery stores making sure they have everything in time for Thanksgiving. And after that, stores will be advertising for early Black Friday deals. Mid-October is a period before the major holidays. I'm looking forward to them!

The Effects of Vaping



Aiden Loyden
Teravista Elementary

Over the weekend I ran across a show portraying a teenager vaping. It peaked my curiosity so I decided to do a little research. To get started you should not vape. Vaping is bad for your lungs and heart. It can cause lung failure. It has a bad chemical called nicotine. It is seriously addictive. Therefore,

if you vape, it won't be once. Nowadays people are making flavors like blue raspberry and cotton candy. This makes it even more addictive for people. Just because it's a different flavor doesn't make it better. Like in football. A cool bright red uniform doesn't make the game better. It's still football.

A vape is an electronic cigarette that simulates tobacco smoking. It's better than inhaling smoke but it's still bad. It's made up of water, nicotine, flavorings and other chemicals. They can kill you. It will cause lung problems to where you feel you can't breathe. It can make you act strange and make poor decisions. That should be enough for you not to vape and kill your good lungs.

Homecoming 2020



Sarah Robertson
Connally H. S.

As football season continues for many high schools around the country, homecoming is one of the most important nights for high schools. It's a time where school spirit is at an all time high and where alumni come and visit their old high school. Since, most of the students at Connally high school are virtual, it was challenging to have spirit week but nevertheless

we still had a spirit week. The spirit week days were: Doctor day, Class dress up, Throwback, and spirit day. Students and teachers had the opportunity to dress up at home as well as at school. It was great seeing all my classmates dress up throughout the week.

On Friday, the football team played against the Rouse Raiders and our volleyball team played against the Hendrickson Hawks. Our football team and our volleyball team unfortunately lost that night but regardless of the loss it was nice seeing a lot of students at the game. As a senior, many things have been taken away from us due to Covid-19, I'm just glad that homecoming was a piece of normality for us. Remember to wash your hands, wear your mask, vote and Go Cougars!