

# UNDERAGE PAGE

## Central Texas Boat Show

■ Marine outlets from across Central Texas will take over Bell County Expo Center today for annual show

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# Cold and flu season: A time of giving

BY ARIANE FLORES  
TEMPLE HIGH SCHOOL

With winter comes the cold and flu season. Temple High School has roughly 2,500 students composing the student body, so it isn't surprising how fast these infections can spread. With thousands of hands touching water fountains, handrails, tables, chairs, desks, pencils, books, lockers and door handles every single minute, you might want to

think twice about buying some hand-sanitizer to carry around.

What exactly causes the common cold? According to CNN health news, a cold virus enters your body through your mouth or nose. Although more than 200 viruses can cause a common cold, the rhinovirus is the most common culprit, and it's highly contagious. The virus can spread through droplets in the air when someone who is sick coughs, sneezes or

## TIPS FOR AVOIDING GERMS

CNN health news offers some preventative measures you can take to save yourself from making multiple trips to the store for Kleenex and Tylenol.

Clean your hands thoroughly and often. Carry a bottle of alcohol-based hand rub containing at least 60 percent

alcohol for times when soap and water aren't available. Use tissues.

Always sneeze and cough into tissues. Discard used tissues right away, and then wash your hands. Don't share drinking glasses or utensils.

Avoid close, prolonged contact with anyone who has a cold.

someone who has a cold or by using shared objects, such

as utensils, towels, toys or telephones. Touch your eyes, nose or mouth after such contact or exposure, and you're likely to "catch" a cold. The common cold is extremely contagious, so wash your hands frequently.

Symptoms to watch out for are runny or stuffy nose, itchy or sore throat, cough, congestion, slight body aches or a mild headache, sneezing, watery eyes, low fever and mild fatigue. While it is true the older we get, the stronger

our immune system becomes in fighting against this virus, due to the winter season and closeness of the student body for eight hours, five days out of the week, it isn't a shock that the cold can attack even the healthiest of students.

Take the time to prevent the common cold from invading your immune system. For those of you who already have come into contact with the nasty little virus, please do all of us a favor, and keep it to yourself.

# Water a little more than H<sub>2</sub>O

## Chemicals found in city, bottled supplies

BY HEATHER FINK  
TEMPLE HIGH SCHOOL

Water has the reputation of being one of the healthiest drinks.

However, in a 2005 study, the Environmental Working Group (EWG) found 141 unregulated chemicals and 119 regulated ones, in U.S. drinking water supplies. The EWG analyzed data from nearly 40,000 water utilities that served 231 million people.

The drinking water contained more than 250 chemicals, some regulated, some not. The most common chemicals found were disinfection byproducts, nitrates, chloroform, barium, arsenic and copper. What is perhaps scarier than that is that Texas is sixth on the list of having the most contaminants in their drinking water.

Where are all of these contaminants in our drinking water coming from? According to EWG, agriculture, industry and urban and other developments are the biggest culprits.

As disturbing as it is to know that there could be hundreds of chemicals lurking in your next glass of water, knowledge is power. And only by learning what the risks may be can you then take action to protect yourself and your family.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that radon in household water causes 30 to 1,800 deaths per year. You may be exposed to radon in your water by two different ways. The first is by breathing in radon vapors from water while doing everyday tasks such as showering and doing dishes and laundry.

The second way, the CDC report said, is through actually ingesting the radon in the water. Because radon evaporates readily into air, surface waters, such as from lakes and rivers, are less likely to contain high levels of the substance. Since radon is tasteless, odorless and colorless, the only way to find out if high levels are in water is with a water test.

There are numerous studies that link drinking chlorinated water to increased risks of cancer, birth defects, miscarriages and more. What you may not realize is showering or bathing in chlorinated water can be just as dangerous as drinking it — even more so.

The Web site www.SixWise.com reports that some estimates say by taking a hot shower you end up absorbing more than 600 percent more chlorine and other chemicals than you would from drinking



Jonathan McGinnis Illustration

Studies have found a variety of chemicals in tap water of many cities. Despite a perception of being better for people, bottled water is sometimes not safe either.

the same unfiltered water all day!

This is because, when you shower, the warm water opens up your skin's pores, making it like a sponge for chlorine. Meanwhile, the steam in your shower, which you readily inhale, is full of chlorine and its byproducts. Since your skin is the largest organ of your body, some estimates say steam can transport into your body up to 100 times the toxic chemicals as you would get from drinking tap water, the site reported.

The SixWise site also noted prescription drugs, along with medications given to livestock, increasingly show up in ground water, soil, waterways and drinking water. Conventional sewage treatments may not be looking for drugs, and certainly don't always remove them.

Adding to the problem are prescription drugs that aren't used, then are flushed down the toilet — ultimately ending up in the environment, the SixWise site said.

This so-called "pharmaceutical pollution" could have major implications on wildlife, agriculture and humans — yet is only beginning to be studied.

According to testing done for the

Chicago Sun-Times, DEET, a chemical commonly used in insect repellants, may be present in your drinking water.

Though the amounts detected were low — 8.3 parts per trillion — the testing was done during March, when insect repellent use was still low. According to some experts, this is still cause for alarm.

After hearing that your tap water may be contaminated, your first instinct may be to switch to bottled water. Bottled water is not always a safe alternative. Bottled water is regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which has weaker regulations than the Environmental Protection Agency requires for tap water, SixWise reports.

The Sierra Club reports that the National Resources Defense Council (NRDC) tested 103 brands of bottled water and found contamination exceeding allowable limits in about one-third of the brands, including toxins such as arsenic, synthetic organics and bacteria.

It may also irk you to know that the NRDC found that about one-fourth of bottled water is actually bottled tap water (some say it's as much as 40 percent).

# Skipping

## costs us

### Schools miss funds, students education

BY MAKENZIE CLINE  
TEMPLE HIGH SCHOOL

There is one huge problem at Temple High School since beginning the 2008-2009 school year.

Skipping, as most refer to it (unexcused absences), is considered no big deal for many students; however, the teachers and faculty express concern for numerous reasons. It is thought that the students might not make the choice to miss class if they were aware of the severe consequences.

Missing one class period a day, for no apparent reason, may seem harmless and even appealing to most students. After all, what's one missed class going to do to your GPA as long as you do the make-up work?

With this mentality, students forget that actions become habits, and repeating this offense three times the school has the ability to take you to court. And don't think your teachers will forget to mark you absent.

Some students argue teachers are simply trying to make life harder for them by counting them absent; however, teachers here aren't trying to make life harder for you, they have no choice. It is the law and part of their job is to make sure you are present for every class period and the law requires that they report it.

If you continue to miss school up to 10 times in six months the school will be forced to take you to court, where you will be tried in front of a judge for truancy.

By that time, defending your case for missing school so many times is going to be a job done in vain; the judge will more than likely side with the school's attendance protocol and you will be found guilty. A verdict that will go on your personal

record.

Age does make a difference when it comes to missing school. If you are 16 years of age or younger, then it isn't you, it's your parent who will go to jail. If you are 17, you will not be considered an adult; however, your parents will no longer be responsible for you, and thus, you will be the one put on probation. You will then have a criminal record and can be fined up to \$500.

Your driver's license may be revoked or you may never receive one. As a result of being on probation, you will be forced to endure random drug tests.

If you are over the age of 18, you are considered an adult and the repercussions for your actions are much more serious. Instead of getting a minor detention or referral, and instead of getting a fine and/or probation, as an adult, you may be kicked out of high school permanently.

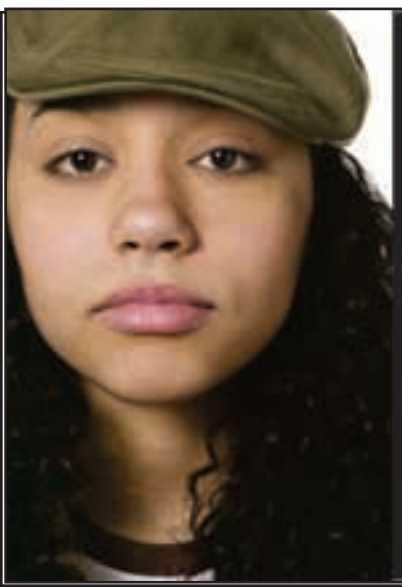
Public schools receive funding based on attendance from students. This money is used to benefit the students because the money is being spent on paying teachers, and maintaining facilities for students.

Every student that does not go to class contributes to the decrease in school funds; this ultimately hinders the education of their peers as well as causing harm to themselves.

Currently Temple High School is at 93.05 percent Average Daily Attendance (ADA). It may seem like a lot but with 2,000 students, at 7 percent the school is losing quite a lot of money.

With a law that states you must be in class at least 90 percent of the time, many credits are being lost to those who choose to skip class.

Being in class is the only solution to this growing problem.



## Get involved.

This page is all about teenagers — their interests, their activities and what they want to read. We accept stories, photos, graphics and ideas from any area teenager.



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