

## **Rat infestation in high school trips alarm, disrupts classes**

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Rats are not a very desirable creature. In history they were blamed for the bubonic plague. They are big, ugly and carry germs, and we have them in classrooms at Hugo High School. Several teachers have reported finding rats either dead or alive in their classrooms. Some rats can be heard in the ceilings, some are traveling the window sills and scurrying into cabinets. Other rats have been found deceased between cabinets and the wall. Our janitors have been diligent about putting out poison and trapping others. Yes, this is an old building, but we do not have to put up with rampant rodents invading our school.

Recently, Mrs. Golden made an announcement that no food or drinks are to be consumed inside our building during school hours. Also every vending machine will be unplugged during this time to help with our problem.

On Sunday, Jan. 17 an alarm went off at 4:30 a.m. The Hugo Police drove to the custodian's house, woke him up and they all went to the high school where they searched and searched but found nothing. Finally, they looked at the video footage and there was one large female rat and seven babies that had apparently tripped the alarm.

During class on the third floor there was an encounter between students and a rat. In a quiet class a student said, "Everyone look over there." It was a rat that was shaking like it was very ill. Mrs. Step said, "Oh my gosh. Hurry, hurry kill it before it leaves and comes back." But there was nothing to kill it with.

A student goes to Ag and grabs a shovel. When the student finally got up to the third floor, someone threw a book at it to slow it down, it was stuck momentarily. The student went stabbing at it but all we got was a foot. However, the rat was still alive and ran behind a cabinet. Two students ran and pushed the cabinet in. But the rat was just stuck until the custodian came and finished the job and all that was left was the student's detailed story.

Hopefully, when spring arrives the rats will want to go out and play. The age of our building is a factor for all kinds of pests. There are many places to hide and reproduce.

This is another important reason for building a new school.