



for kids
by kids

The fungus among us



Photo via Wikipedia

Oregon's honey mushroom looks like the photo above when it spawns, but it spends most of the time underground.

By **LAUREN MURPHY**
Of No Adults Allowed

The world's largest animal is a blue whale, but the largest living organism on earth is a mushroom. That's right, the little things that go on pizza. Oregon is home to the world's largest living thing, a honey mushroom, or shoe-string fungus. It's grown to cover 2.4 miles and stretches across the Blue Mountains in Oregon. This particular fungus is large enough to fill over 200 semi trucks.

This fungus isn't like other fungus though. Most trees have a mutual symbiotic relation-



ship with fungus; that means both the tree and the mushroom benefit by the mushroom growing on/around the tree. Mushrooms are a decomposer, meaning they eat dead things. Mushrooms will eat the dead and rotting bark from the tree so that it can be healthy. This helps both the tree and the mushroom.

Another type of symbiotic relationship is called, parasitism. This is where one species (the honey mushroom) benefits and the other (the tree) suffers. Another example of this would be fleas on a dog.

The honey mushroom is a parasite. This particular fungus

is known for killing trees, it'll eat the bad, rotten bark; it will also eat the living, healthy bark too. It can take anywhere from 20 to 50 years for a tree to die.

One of the things that's so cool about this fungus is its ability to change form. Picture your traditional fungi, the little white cap and stem. It only looks like that for about one week in the fall. The majority of the time it looks like a white film that spreads across trees.

How does it move from tree

to tree? It's actually a really cool process. The mushroom will change form, yet again, to go underground. It'll send black, shoestring like, fibers underground and attack the trees roots.

If you were to scoop it all up and pile it together scientists estimate that Oregon's honey mushroom could weigh at least 7,500 tons, (that's like 50 blue whales!).



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Superman goes by Clark Kent when he isn't saving the world, but what name was he born with?

- a) Mon-El c) Kal-El
- b) Zod d) Jor-El

Send your answer to: noadults@keizertimes.com

We will select **ONE WINNER** with the correct answer to receive a gift certificate to **TONY'S KINGDOM OF COMICS**.

Entries due by noon on Tuesday, Jan 29.

It might look cool, but vaping is dangerous

By **ERIC A. HOWALD**
Of No Adults Allowed

You may already think that kids are cooler than adults, but there's actual science to back it up.

Right now, your brain is still growing. That means every time you learn something new in school, or at home, or with your friends it's like a new bridge is built inside your brain. The bridges are called synapses and they connect one piece of information to others already there.

(After a certain age this



will stop happening making you infinitely cooler than adults). It will keep happening until you are about 25 years old, and that's why you need to be making good choices now.

One of the things that can get in the way of your brain developing new bridges is smoking of any kind – and that include e-cigarettes, vaping and juuling.

It's been known for a long time that products containing nicotine (the primary ingredient in cigarettes) is bad for your health. It can cause cancer and other breathing-related diseases. But, even e-cigarettes



NO VAPING

which the fluids are turned into a vapor also creates additional problems for smokers and non-smokers who inhale the vapor.

Because these products are still relatively new, even scientists don't know all the potential problems they can cause.

Companies who produce vaping products are also good at getting your attention. Because they don't have to play by the same rules as cigarette companies, they use colors and flavors to attract younger people – people like you. You've got to be smarter than that.

So listen, you only get one brain in a lifetime. Keep yours safe by making good choices now and always, especially when it comes to smoking and vaping.



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