# Let's see you eat my change

**Whitney Johnson**
**Charger Staff**

Hallelujah! The end of the vending machines is nigh! I have long passed these contributors to low self-esteem and bad health and held contempt for them in my heart. Their removal is going to be one of the most productive events to happen to Cookeville High School in the coming years.

Let us face the cold, hard facts. Intaking twenty ounces of pure caffeine and sugar is not good for anyone. Taking too much caffeine into your system can erode the linings of the esophagus and stomach. Caffeine is the most popular drug in the world, but many people use it as indiscriminately as water. This is a grave mistake.

Caffeine is a stimulant whose potency as an addictive substance is increased by its solvent being cold, like the carbonated water in soft drinks. This is why so many people say they "cannot live without" drinking two or three Coca-Colas a day. The amount of caffeine put into these drinks can cause high blood pressure, speed up the heart and affect the nervous system. It also causes insomnia.

Have you ever actually read the nutrition labels on soft drinks? A single twenty ounce bottle of Coca-Cola contains two hundred fifty calories. It also has sixty-seven and a half grams each of sugar and carbohydrates.

That is not just nightmare material for your dentist. All those sugar and carbs can cause weight gain and blocks iron and calcium absorption in the body. This seriously disrupts bone development in teenagers. Hear that? Drinking Coke actually can stunt your growth.

Even the color of Coke is bad for you. Dyes like E-150 have been linked to vitamin B6 deficiency (which, by the way, is a vitamin that speeds up the metabolism so the body burns calories faster), hyperactivity and low blood sugar. While consuming massive amounts of carbonated soft drinks has not been proven to cause juvenile diabetes, a deadly disease, it certainly is not preventing it.

The facts mentioned above only cover one of the items being yanked out of the high school vending machines. Let us move on to the snack foods.

Remember when you learned about the food guide pyramid in second grade? Government money went into the manufacturing of that chart to help Americans eat healthier, well-balanced meals. If you remember, snack foods had a special place on the pyramid right at the very top--the "eat sparingly" triangle.

I am not condemning snacks. Many athletes find it beneficial to eat small meals rich with protein every three hours, since the human body can only process so much protein in that time.

Protein-rich snacks include graham crackers with peanut butter. Some snacks like fruit and vegetables are extremely healthy!

The ones offered in the vending machines are not. The actual ingredients in many snack foods are rather repulsive. To make these foods taste better, they are baked, fried or confectioned until they have insane amounts of salt, fat and sugar. However, these snacks can actually be decent sources of important oils and fats when eaten in a wider diet. The behavior leading to obesity occurs when people eat these snacks as a cheaper alternative to an overpriced lunch, or when people fool themselves into thinking that eating less is eating better. This is not true! It all goes back to the food pyramid, a device which should become a person's dearest friend!

The sad truth is that many of these healthier alternatives are the same price or cheaper, like milk, apple juice, orange juice or other fruit drinks made with natural ingredients. Next time you go grocery shopping with your mom or dad, grab an apple, banana or a bag of carrots instead of grabbing Cheez-its or Spongebob Squarepants cereal. Take five extra minutes before bedtime to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich for lunch instead of buying chili cheese fries and pizza.

Good health is not out of reach for any student at CHS, but it is a difficult adjustment. I salute the school administration and the school board for taking the first step on the long road of health reformation.

# *"Me-time": break it down... time for me*

**Alison Palmer**
**Editor-in-Chief**

A while back, I was flipping through an old copy of *The Charger*, and I found an opinion article by a former staff member about the importance of "me-time." I scoffed and thought, "Wow, that person really couldn't think of anything to write about."

As I enter the beginning of second-semester, however, I am beginning to see the wisdom in the words of my predecessor.

Second-semester often brings added stress to students and is, unfortunately, also the time when students feel like working the least. Seniors have the highly contagious "senioritis" and are stressed out about life after high school, college and finding a job.

Other students are trying to juggle sports and extra-curricular activities on top of their school work. Some are stressing over the dreaded AP tests, and everyone is counting the days to when the final bell rings and school will be out, and a stress-free summer will begin.

Sometimes all of this stress can have adverse affects on people. The most common affect is deciding that since one has so much to do, it's better not even to start, than to try and not finish.

For instance, say that you go home and you have a ton of homework sitting on your desk. You stare at it a while. Your subconscious tells you to do your math homework and to study for your English test.

But then a thought creeps in. "I could just not do it." You stare at your books for a few more seconds when out of the corner of your eye you see your CDs, your television, and your bed, and the thought comes, "I can listen to music, watch TV or go to sleep *instead* of doing my homework."

Almost everyone who has these thoughts succumbs to the temptation. Unfortunately this often causes major slacking in school work and bad grades.

So, instead of burning yourself out until you can't (or won't) do anything, I have an alternative plan. A plan that will not only keep grades from plummeting, but that will also allow students to enjoy their second-semester with slightly less stress.

My plan lies with the aforementioned "me-time" To maintain a healthy level of sanity, it is necessary to slow down for a while and do something for yourself.

Take a break from life and watch your favorite television show or read a book. If nothing else, take a nap. Now, some might say that they don't have time for this so-called "me-time." For those people, take a look at all the stuff that is making you so busy. Is there anything you can cut out of your schedule? If so, take it out and do something that you want to do with the extra time, even if it's only for a few minutes.

Also, often, even though we are incredibly busy, we always find time to go out with out with our friends. That's great, but sometimes it adds to the craziness. Instead, skip out on your friends and relax at home.

This "me-time" has really worked for me. I'm a happier and a little less reluctant to do my work as long as I have some time each week to do something by myself.

What is my "me-time" activity of choice you may ask? Well, I enjoy a reading good book, watching a nice reality television show and dancing in front of my mirror while listening to music.

# *Work . . .a burden or a bless-*

**Amber Dixon**
**Charger Staff**

Wake up at 6 a.m., be in first block before 8 a.m., bells ringing all day then out at 3 p.m. Then go to work and be there by 5 p.m. Close at 10 p.m. Do the exact same thing tomorrow, and the next and the day after that, and every two weeks get a really nice paycheck. Of course the paycheck is the main reason that many students work thirty to thirty-five hours every week in addition to attending school.

That is what it is like for students like me. I almost have no life, but for me it's okay. I only have one class with homework, and I'm over eighteen, so my curfew isn't until 11 p.m.

I only have two days off per week, but don't get me wrong, work is good, just like my paycheck.

Senior Kayla Boas said, "I hate my hours; I don't mind working at Subway though."

Getting a job, keeping it and enjoying at least the paycheck is all a part of growing up. So, deal with it.

Even if your just a summer or part-time worker, you know what I'm talking about. However, trying to work and go to school is difficult.

I don't really have any time for homework, dates or just time to chill out and sleep. I even come to school with my hair wet all the time

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The purposes of *The Charger* are to inform, entertain, and provide both a catalyst and a forum for student expression.

*The Charger*'s editorial responsibility lies not in presenting a particular viewpoint or agenda, but in representing a variety of opinions.

*The Charger* staff leaves the right to edit or censor its contents to student staff and editors. The unsigned editorial opinions are those of the editorial staff.

Students, faculty or others wishing to respond to an article or editorial in *The Charger* are encouraged to write letters to the editor. *The Charger* reserves the right to edit the material (for space, spelling, mechanics, etc.) so long as the meaning remains unchanged.

Letters to the editor must be signed, although names will be withheld by request if circumstances call for it.

Letters writers are strongly encouraged to allow their names to be included with the letter because a signed statement has far more impact than an unsigned one.

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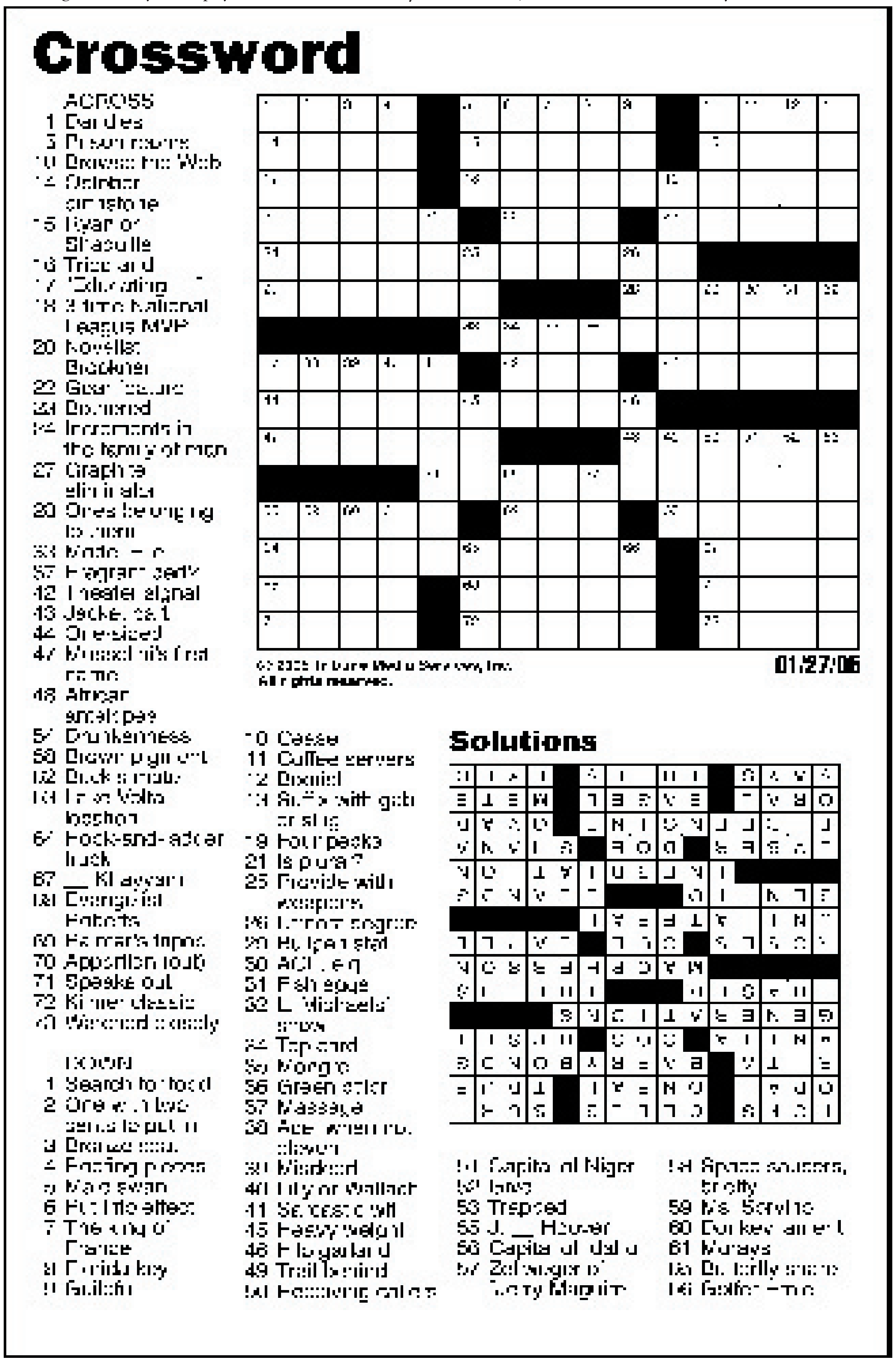
Submissions may also be delivered to faculty advisor Sharon K. Anderson in Room 226 or Room 31.