



The High School View

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Free lunch policy is warmly received

BY SARA CREATO AND OLIVIA MACPHERSON

On April 20, 2021, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that the free school lunch program that began during the pandemic will be extended for the entirety of the 2021–22 school year. The program has been successful, as more school lunches are being served than ever before.

Principal Sara Dingley attributes this to the absence of the payment process: "Waiting to pay or put in your [lunch] number has been eliminated, and I think that has changed people's willingness to engage in free lunch. Our participation rates are through the roof."

Before the pandemic, the Free and Reduced Lunch Pro-

gram was available for families who met state income guidelines. However, the process of applying for the program can be overwhelming. "The problem with free and reduced lunch is that it requires a lot of active participation by parents and kids to complete the form," said Ms. Dingley. She added, "I think our numbers may not reflect the full numbers, because I'm sure there were some people who just opted out of that collection process."

School lunch program coordinator Mercedes Ferreira is supportive of the free lunch program because lunch may be the only meal a student receives during the day. "It's nice that everybody is on an even playing field once they come into the cafeteria," she said.



Lunch program coordinator Mercedes Ferreira prepares rolls to serve with the daily lunch offering.

PARKER BRADLEE

School lunch administrators keep records of the number of lunches they distribute, and the USDA then reimburses the school for these meals.

Free lunch has also made healthy meals more accessible, though Ms. Dingley

recalls witnessing students struggle with this challenge. "[Prior to the free lunch option], I would see kids going into the vending machine, getting chips and water, and that was the extent of what people sometimes got for

lunch," she said. "We've eliminated the vending machines, and now the options are healthy and substantial."

Feeding America, the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief organization, estimates that 13 million children will experience hunger this year. This number is an increase from 10 million two years ago.

Junior Anabelle Brothers said, "[The statistic] really puts into perspective the impact COVID has had on families," she said. "Families who already faced the stress of providing food for their families prepandemic now have been pushed over the edge."

Senior Kristin Perzanowski agrees. "We need to prioritize and figure out [a solution to] this rising crisis, and share our food supply to ensure everyone is taken care of," she said.

Ms. Dingley feels that free school lunch enables students

to succeed in both school and extracurricular activities.

"[Removing the cost of lunch] gets people good-quality food during the day that gets kids through practice, afterschool activities, and jobs," she said. "The quality of the food has really improved students' ability to engage and participate in things after school."

Mercedes is unsure of what's to come with the program's post-pandemic fate. "I would love for it to continue, but I don't know how it can," she said. "I don't know how the USDA can continue to pay for every student to eat free."

Anabelle doesn't want the program curbed after the pandemic. "For people who struggle with food stability, free meals can make all the difference. Food equality is a huge issue, and [free school lunch] helps provide many students with at least one guaranteed meal that is well-balanced and healthy." **HSV**

The Flemish Coil strikes again

BY HARDY EVILLE

It's 9:30 pm, and while other teachers who have finished their work for the day are watching TV, reading, or heading to sleep, math teacher Kris Chvatal is sitting outside, typing clues for homemade word puzzles into his phone.

"I like to work outside, even in the winter," he said. "I'll bring the phone out there and I'll put in 45 minutes and relax." Later, he transcribes the clues, completing one puzzle each week when he's "on his game."

This particular adventure in puzzlemaking began during the pandemic, when Mr. Chvatal was looking for ways to occupy his time.

"It let me take my mind off what was going on, and at night I would prefer not to sit in front of the TV," he said.

However, puzzles are far from new to Mr. Chvatal. He began doing codebreaking

word puzzles at 12 years old, and moved on to doing the New York Times crossword at 14, to entertain himself during his long ride to school.

"I still do at least one [puzzle] a day," he said. "Sometimes I like to work for just five minutes, first thing in the morning. I find it wakes me up, gets my brain going."

At 16 he created his first crossword puzzle using Scrabble tiles, but now focuses on creating other word games.

"I don't make any crossword puzzles. Right now those are mostly generated by computers," he said, explaining how crossword writers input a few long words that develop a theme and software fills in the rest.

"There are so many crossword puzzles out there, and so many crossword puzzle makers. It's just too crowded, and I didn't think I had anything to add," he said. "The puzzles I focus on are spirals, which I

call the Flemish Coil."

The name Flemish Coil comes from the way ropes on ships are organized on deck, laid out in a spiral formation. Instead of rope, the puzzles are 100 spiraled characters that correspond to a bank of clues. The characters make one set of words going from the center of the spiral out, and a different set of words going from the outside in.

"They're really hard to construct, that's why there are not many people making them," he said. In addition to spirals, Mr. Chvatal makes other wordplay puzzles, mainly wheels and fill-in-the-blank puzzles.

"I wrote one called Shark Bite, where the puzzle looks like the open jaw on the shark, with V's for the teeth on the top and A's for the teeth on the bottom," he said.

Mr. Chvatal runs the puzzles by a friend who edits

them for him before sending the puzzles off for other interested friends to solve.

Currently, he's working on improving writing clues to make his puzzles tighter and more precise.

"That's kind of the crux of it all," he said. "You want a clue that's difficult but accessible, so that when the puzzler does get that answer they'll go, 'Of course!'"

When making a puzzle, there are some rules that Mr. Chvatal follows. In crosswords and puzzles where words overlap, one cannot have one esoteric clue rely on another esoteric clue. He also likes clues that are specific.

"Then you can get there right away and not have to juggle 200 synonyms," he said.

However, he explains that clues can also be too specific, and gives an example from a recent crossword where the clue was a zip code and the answer was the city within that zip code, an impossible clue for those unfamiliar with the area (which in this case was Peoria, Ill.).

The Flemish coil (No. 2)
Words and phrases suggested by the clues below flow both inward (1-100) and outward (100-1). The Flemish coil is a manner of tidying up lines on a ship.

<p>Inward</p> <p>1-8 hometown of the Beach Boys' "little old lady"</p> <p>9-14 2021 documentary "Exterminate All the _____"</p> <p>15-20 most wan</p> <p>21-26 abrupt</p> <p>27-34 Lagos native</p> <p>35-37 medium of da Vinci's <i>Mona Lisa</i></p> <p>38-48 W. S. Gilbert and others</p> <p>49-55 river linking Erie and Ontario</p> <p>56-66 active at twilight</p> <p>67-71 40-30 space enthusiast</p> <p>72-79 surpass</p> <p>80-88 "Just a sec!"</p> <p>89-96 attic stuffers</p> <p>97-100 "Sure, what the heck!" in text</p>	<p>Outward</p> <p>100-92 40-30 Avenger</p> <p>91-84 Verne's submarine cmdr.</p> <p>83-78 material for a folder</p> <p>77-70 highly skilled performer</p> <p>69-65 London pedestrian crossing</p> <p>64-62 Sante or Robitaille</p> <p>61-54 Bugatti Veyron, for example</p> <p>53-47 versus</p> <p>46-41 caretaker</p> <p>40-30 one with ten digits</p> <p>29-24 created or stimulated, with "up"</p> <p>23-19 tidies up</p> <p>18-13 go by, as time</p> <p>12-5 wearing a pagri or dastar</p> <p>4-1 right now, briefly</p>
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PUZZLE BY KRIS CHVATAL

Mr. Chvatal's puzzles cover humor, film, literature, music, and history—but not sports.

"I think that sports appeal to a certain type of puzzle maker, but it doesn't appeal to me," he said. "This is just a

hobby, it keeps my mind busy and active." **HSV**

If you are interested in trying more of Mr. Chvatal's puzzles you can email him at mvpuzzler@gmail.com.

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