Students find shelter in Safe House

Varsity softball leads off into season

Dive into the world of Braille
Number of students affects classes, scheduling

by Gregory Lapp

Each year, many small schools face the challenge of deciding what electives to offer to students. Interests in a particular subject and teacher availability are taken into consideration, but class size is also a determining factor. At Brocton, classes run between 30 and 60 students, so the larger classes have a better chance of having a wider range of course choices whereas smaller classes see them eliminated.

Classes that have more students can cause a multitude of different issues for the teacher and the guidance department, whether it be a core or an elective class. “It can sometimes be hard to fit every single student into required classes when they all could have different schedules,” guidance counselor Robert Wright said.

Large classes can also affect the way teachers have to teach a class, having to make certain accommodations for a large number of students. “Having a large class can be hard because while you are working with one student, the others feel the need to avoid work,” English teacher Chrissy Marsh said.

In different elective courses, a large number of students can cause issues within the class. Overfilling a class, even in a small school, is possible if many students want to take it. Marsh recounted an experience she had with such a thing. “I had to split students into groups one year during a Yearbook elective of 22 students, which is always a risky thing to do because certain students will do a lot more than others.”

A large number of students can also result in other issues. “I am in a large class that is almost full of students that can cause issues, especially with laptop charging,” freshman Luis Deliz said. “Learning can also be difficult because there seems to be always someone talking, but you just have to adapt.”

Small classes can create an issue for scheduling and teachers of core and elective classes. “I have a first period class with only five people,” history teacher Carrie McCausland said. “This can be hard because it is just awkward compared to my other U.S. History classes. It can be hard for the students when I choose to do a group activity in my larger classes, which causes the five of them to do a lot of extra work.”

Small classes can also affect students and how they learn. “Everyone is forced to answer questions and raise their hand,” junior Megan Gloss said. “I am in a class with only five people, which is hard. One of the nice things is it is not loud or cramped.”

Absences can also cause issues within small classes. Having to halt a class period and learning just because one or two people are absent can cause a complete period to get behind in the curriculum. “I have three English 11 classes, and the numbers for each class vary.” English teacher Rose Carr said. “For my first period class, I have 13 students and in Period 4, only five. My Period 9 class has 19. If there are four juniors absent and all four of them are in my Period 4 class, I cannot proceed with my lesson since most of the students in that class won’t be there.”

Carr indicated that putting off a lesson due to absent students is an issue only some of the time. “Fortunately, I tend to go through my lesson much faster with smaller classes because with fewer students, there are fewer questions I have to answer, so it’s not usually a big deal covering the material of two lessons over the course of one day.”

Small elective classes can either be a blessing or a curse. “My first year of a pre-calculus class had only two people. Since then, my numbers have been eight, then six,” math teacher Mimi Joint said. “This, however, I am used to because typically with my high level math classes, there are fewer people.”

If the number enrolled in an elective was small enough, the course could be eliminated due to the lack of interest. “Art classes get lost a lot of the time because of a lack of students,” Wright said. “We end up keeping the ones with the most students. Classes for JCC, however, we try to save even if there are only a few kids in them due to the fact that students can earn college credits.”

Last year, English teacher Travis Perry taught an independent study for his creative writing class. “An independent study is a nice way to save a class for either a student who really wants to take a class that has been cut or a student who doesn’t have time to take a class in its assigned place,” he said.

According to the Brookings Institution, class size is an issue, especially with smaller schools. Just by the addition of one student, the entire class structure is changed due to New York State requirements.

Overall, larger and smaller classes have different effects on everyone. Students, scheduling and teachers are all changed by the number of kids in a class.
Students in need of a shelter due to issues at home can get help at the Safe House. It is located on Sixth Street in Jamestown and provides basic necessities, a place to sleep and case management to anyone under the age of 18. Youth may leave the shelter when they please and stay up to 30 days.

“The Safe House is beneficial for students who feel unsafe at home and have no other place to go.” - social worker Amber Nickerson

According to the Chautauqua Opportunities website, the facility is a shelter that provides crisis services to youth who have no homes. There are 12 beds for kids to use, and the House operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

School social worker Amber Nickerson explained that the Safe House provides students a secure environment until they find a permanent home. “The Safe House is beneficial for students who feel unsafe at home and have no other place to go,” she said. “It is no vacation or luxury life, but it is a safe environment where they will work with the students to find them solutions in order to make their living situations more ideal.”

Josiah Lamp, the Housing and Community Development Director of Chautauqua Opportunities, detailed the services provided. “On site, we provide food and clothing as well as case management,” he said. “We link youth to mental health, substance abuse or family counseling as needed.”

According to Lamp, the Safe House works with kids and their families as well. “One of our goals is to work with both youth and their families to mediate conflict and allow the youth to return home if it is safe and appropriate,” he explained.

He indicated that the services provided are free. “There is no fee for youth for our services,” he said. “The programs are funded through government grants and donations.”

Youth have a limited amount of time they can stay at the Safe House. However, they may leave earlier if they choose. “The program is voluntary for youth,” Lamp said.

“One of our goals is to work with both youth and their families to mediate conflict and allow the youth to return home if it is safe and appropriate.” - COI Housing and Community Development Director Josiah Lamp

“If the youths are runaways, the goal is to identify the issues that caused them to run away and work towards family mediation or locating another permanent safe housing option.”

After heading home from the Safe House, care is offered for up to 90 days to help stabilize living conditions and family dynamics.

Nickerson indicated that Brocton Central School must provide help for the kids who want to go to the Safe House. “If a student during school hours would like to go stay at the Safe House, we as a district must provide them with that transportation,” she said.

According to guidance counselor Robert Wright, the school has referred students to the Safe House. “The students continue to be our students in the district, and we provide them with transportation to and from school,” he said.

The Safe House is always looking for volunteers to help run the facility. “Volunteers can contact Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc.’s human resources department to express interest,” Lamp said. “They would need to complete a full background check to work with the youth, but those in the education field are probably very familiar with that process.”

Volunteer forms can be found on the COI website and can be returned to the Human Resources Department in Dunkirk.

The Safe House accepts donations as well. “We welcome donations, which can be made on COI’s website,” Lamp said. “Or a check made out to Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc.”
At a glance

Compiled by MaryAnne Hosmer

Junior and Senior Prom
Students dance the night away on May 18.

Budget Vote
Residents can vote for the 2019-2020 budget from noon to 8:00 PM on May 21.

MS Band/Chorus Concert
The concert will take place on May 21 at 7:00 PM.

Board of Education Meeting
The Board will meet on May 21 at 8:30 PM and June 5 and 26 at 7:00 PM.

Kindergarten Screening
Kindergarten screening will take place May 22 and 23.

Memorial Day Weekend
Students will have no school Friday, May 24, or Monday, May 27, to celebrate Memorial Day.

Progress Reports
Reports are mailed home on May 31 for the 35-week marking period.

CCMTA Spring Festival
The music festival will be held at the Chautauqua Institution on June 1 at 7:30 PM.

Flag Day
Flag Day is on Friday, June 14.

Class Night
Seniors celebrate their class on Friday, June 14, beginning at 7:00 PM in the high school auditorium.

Last Day of Regular Classes
The last day of regular high school classes is Monday, June 17.

Final Exams
Regents and Common Core exams begin on June 18 and continue through June 25.

Father’s Day
Celebrate the father in your life on June 16.

PBIS Assembly
The PBIS Assembly will occur on June 19 at 9:15 AM.

Orientation
Sixth grade orientation will be on June 20 at 10:15 AM.

Graduation
Graduation will be held on Saturday, June 29, at 10:00 AM in the high school gym.
by Courtney Tobias

On April 17 at 7:00 PM, the Brocton music department put on the Talent Show in the auditorium as an alternative to a musical production. There were a total of 22 performances with 24 performers.

The show began with senior Dylan Murphy as the Master of Ceremonies, welcoming everyone and singing a song of his own. They then transitioned into the Star-Spangled Banner played by sixth grader Colden Noody on guitar. “It was disappointing to not perform more,” Murphy said, “especially because it is my senior year. I liked being the Master of Ceremonies because I felt like an authoritative figure.”

Sophomore EmmaLee Abbey rocked the stage with a dance she choreographed to the song “I Wanna Be A Rockette!” by Andrea Mc Ardle. “I had two performances in the talent show, and they went surprisingly well,” Abbey said. “I’m used to dancing in front of a lot of people, so it wasn’t nervous.”

Up next was sixth grader Samya Valle and seventh graders Aiden Hallowell and Stevonia McNair singing “I Want It That Way” by the Backstreet Boys. “I had a hard time getting over a knee injury before the show as well,” Valle said. “I stepped out of my comfort zone singing with Pandora.”

After Valentine, The Pale Lines took the stage, a band that consists of Wahl, sophomore Parker Briggs and sophomore Zachary Halpainy. They performed the song “Fell In Love With A Girl” by The White Stripes.

“I was thoroughly impressed by many of the acts,” spectator Collin Mulcahy said, “but the one that sticks out the most was definitely the musical act of Parker Briggs, Ben Wahl and Zack Halpainy. They are very talented musicians.”

Eight grader Haven Hallowell played a flute solo of the song “Tambourine” by F. J. Gossec and was accompanied by Offenbach Smith on piano. The song “I Could Have Danced All Night” from the musical “My Fair Lady” was then performed solo by freshman Grace Sunday.

Taking the stage again, The Pale Lines sang another song by The White Stripes titled “The Hardest Button to Button.” Following them was Billy Lanski with a drum solo.

Rizzo and freshman Andrew Perdue put on a skit about a baseball team called “Who’s On First?” After the skit was Ray singing a solo of “I Won’t Give You,” “The Show Must Go On” and “We Are the Champions.”

“I was happy with our teacher performance because I don’t get opportunities like that very often,” Gens said. “I like doing things out of my comfort zone because students have to do it all the time, and I can relate better to them by doing this type of activity.”

Valentine made another appearance in the show, singing the song “Without Me” by Halsey with her cousin, Pandora Kew. “I usually get really bad stage fright,” Valentine said. “I stepped out of my comfort zone singing with Pandora.”

“I was thrilled to be part of the show,” one of the acts, spectator Collin Mulcahy said. “I really enjoyed the talent show, and I think the show couldn’t have gone better.”

“Taking the stage again, The Pale Lines sang another song by The White Stripes titled “The Hardest Button to Button.” Following them was Billy Lanski with a drum solo.

Rizzo and freshman Andrew Perdue put on a skit about a baseball team called “Who’s On First?” After the skit was Ray singing a solo of “I Won’t Give

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Up” by Jason Mraz.

“Lorin Rizzo and Andrew Perdue’s skit was very comical,” Mulcahy said. “I was in tears laughing, and they were a great pairing.”

The last gymnastics/dance routine of the show was performed by Wdowiasz and seventh grader Mia Haase to Cardi B’s song “I Like It.”

Spectator Jenelle Grigelevich indicated this performance was her favorite. “I was really impressed by some of the acrobatics,” she said. “It was the best out of the three gymnastics routines, in my opinion.”

Abbey performed a dance again that she choreographed herself to “Gravity” by Sara Bareilles.

For the finale, 13 of the performers dressed in black clothing with glow sticks attached to make them look like stick figures. They danced to a variety of songs such as “Cupid Shuffle” by Cupid, “Sweet Caroline” by Neil Diamond and “La Macarena” by Los Del Rio.

Hornbuckle indicated the finale was his favorite. “I really enjoyed how everything came together with the glow stick dance,” he said. “It turned out really awesome.”

Senior Collin Lacki worked the light and sound board with sophomore Jacen Morton controlling the spotlight.

Backstage and set design was run by pre-k teacher Susan Boettcher, sophomore Makenna Honey and other performers.

Boettcher pointed out she had several of the students when they were young, and she enjoyed getting to see them again and see how much they’ve grown.

“I would love to help again,” she said. “I think it would be great if Brocton did both a musical and talent show. They are two completely different avenues to showcase the talent that Brocton students have up their sleeves.”

Hornbuckle indicated that attendance for the show was approximately 100 people. “This was a little lower than expected, but it was not a bad turnout,” he said. “Everything cost little to no money to put on. We did not need to rent a show or pay for the rights for a show as we would when we put on a full-scale musical.”

According to Abbey, there was some preparing they had to do before the big show. “Each group or performer got to run through their acts once or twice, which was about two to three hours of practice,” she said. “There was also some painting needed for props, but it was mostly just practicing.”

According to Mulcahy, his expectations for the show were blown away by the variety of talented acts that were showcased. He said, “Brocton is full of talented young students.”
Mental wellness: key to staying healthy

by Laura Johnston

A mental health illness is defined by a physical illness of the brain that causes disturbances in thinking, behavior, energy or emotion that make it difficult to cope with the ordinary demands of life, according to the National Institute of Mental Health. Being in a good psychological state allows a person to stay healthy not only mentally but physically as well. According to Psychology Today, it is unhealthy to leave mental health illnesses untreated.

Studies that were taken by the National Institute of Mental Health show that nearly one in five U.S. adults lives with a mental illness. Of all the people that have mental illnesses, only half receive help because of the stigma attached to mental health.

High school principal Elizabeth Antolina indicated that Brocton is affected by mental health. “An unofficial count was taken and it showed that 19% of Brocton students have mental health issues,” she said. “My job has changed over the past five to six years. In terms of discipline, primarily we deal with mental health problems.”

Psychology Today indicated that if a mental health illness is not treated, it will affect people in many aspects of their lives. For example, someone with depression might only experience a handful of symptoms at first. If left untreated, that person may begin to experience the full range of depression symptoms, therefore needing more intensive treatment and having a more uncertain recovery journey.

The same source reported that when mental illnesses become too challenging, sometimes a person’s body will bear some of the burden. Chronic stress can lead to gastrointestinal distress.

Constant tensing of the muscles can lead to headaches and muscle pain. It is also common for people with underlying mental illnesses to complain of aches and pains that have no physical source.

Mental illnesses left untreated not only take a toll on the body, but they also can make it very difficult to cope with the demands of daily life, according to Psychology Today. Many with depression struggle to get out of bed, and some with schizophrenia experience communication issues.

No matter what the mental illness is, Psychology Today stressed the fact that if left untreated, problems arise later on in one’s life. Some of the problems include financial struggles, job loss and potentially homelessness. These problems then can further complicate the mental illness that the person is dealing with.

Other problems that people struggle with if they leave their mental illness untreated include suicidal thoughts or thoughts of hurting themselves. Psychology Today indicated that mental illnesses that do not get treatment can make life intolerable and cloud people’s judgment. This leads to them not being able to see the way out of their situations, which may lead them to suicide. More than 90% of suicides are directly attributed to untreated mental illness.

Mental health illnesses can cause many negative effects to the body. Normally people that develop these mental issues are under extreme stress, according to National Cancer Institution (NCI). This stress can be caused both by daily responsibilities and routine events as well as by more unusual events such as a trauma or illness in oneself or a close family member.

Some studies suggest that psychological stress can cause cancer, but the evidence is weak. However, NCI stated that the apparent links between psychological stress and cancer could arise in several ways. For example, people under extreme stress may resort to certain behaviors, such as smoking, overeating or drinking alcohol, all things that can increase a person’s risk for cancer.

Most studies say that people with mental health problems should go to a counselor or find help in some way. However, only half of people with mental issues actually get help. This is because of the stigma attached to mental health illnesses. According to the Mental Health Foundation, the social discrimination that people experience after receiving help can make their difficulties worse and make it harder to recover.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, there are many tools that can improve the road to wellness: medication, counseling, social support and education. Counseling can take many forms, from learning relaxation skills to intensively reworking thinking patterns. As for social support, acceptance and encouragement from friends, family and others can make a difference.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness also indicated that education about mental health illnesses can help. It can provide the skills and supports to enrich the journey toward overall recovery and wellness. However, it is known that different people, even with the same illness, will need different treatment. Not all people have the same experiences, and there is no “one size fits all” treatment.

Being in a healthy psychological state allows people to realize their full potential, cope with the stresses of life, work productively and make meaningful contributions to their communities, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Antolina indicated that she does many activities to maintain her mental health. “I play bass... Cont’d on page 14
Leave the bathroom alone

The recent implementation of a family/all-gender bathroom in the high school wing of Brocton has caused a major uproar among students. Students have to realize that it is a bathroom, not a place in which to mess around or vandalize. The bathroom may be against some students’ views, but that does not mean that they can be disrespectful. Those who have displayed this type of behavior need to understand that there are consequences to this type of destruction.

One problem that the bathroom is facing is vandalism. Students are entering the bathroom and leaving it a mess. According to principal Elizabeth Antolina, there have been enough cases that have occurred where extra watch over the bathroom is necessary.

“Students are using the bathroom to skip, they are not flushing the toilet and someone destroyed the restroom sign hung up outside the bathroom,” she said. “Everyone in the school is in charge of looking after the bathroom. We need to step up and protect each other.”

That is completely true. Everyone needs to be united and take a stand against hatred. What do students get out of vandalizing this bathroom? They need to know that they are violating a law. According to the New York State Senate, this kind of vandalism can be charged as criminal mischief in the fourth degree and is a Class A misdemeanor. Penalties of a Class A misdemeanor can include $500 to $5,000 worth of fines, close to a year of jail time and/or community service. Students need to realize that with such actions come hefty consequences.

In 2010, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) signed the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) into law, and it took effect in 2012. According to NYSED, DASA seeks to create safe place for students to be themselves and express their feelings. “Under DASA, the vandalism can be considered as a hate crime,” superintendent Jason Delcamp said. “Students have to realize that the things that they are doing are actual crimes.”

Something all students should be aware of is the presence of Title IX. According to the United States Department of Justice, Title IX prevents schools of all levels from using federal money to discriminate against students based on gender. This means that it is illegal for schools to deny students the freedom to use the bathroom that they feel the most comfortable using.

According to the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, all-gender and family bathrooms are becoming more popular. Some transgender students are being denied the freedom to use a bathroom they are comfortable using, and by vandalizing this bathroom, students are denying the freedoms of transgender students. Those who don’t agree with an all-gender bathroom need to realize that more public places are providing them, and they are becoming the norm rather than the exception.

According to Delcamp, another question that students must ask themselves is this: “Is that appropriate?” Some do not even think about the consequences of their actions before doing something. They need to realize that when they act without thinking, they make themselves look immature. When people see or hear that they vandalized the bathroom, they are not going to say, “Oh, that’s funny.” They are going to say, “How old are they?”

No one appreciates vandalism, and it’s simply not funny. The bathroom is not a place for buffoonery. 

Dylan Murphy
Vaccines pose no threat, but children do

by Dylan Murphy

Recent measles outbreaks around the Hudson River area and New York City have revived the long-running debate: should children be vaccinated? The answer lies within oneself … literally. Vaccines were made in order for people to stay healthy. They do not give children autism, and they do not make children sick. Look at the facts, people. Vaccinating children is necessary. This is a choice that can be made by parents, one that will affect children’s lives. According to health teacher Maria Sigeti, people need to listen to what doctors are telling them. “I think it’s very important to vaccinate my children,” she said. “After having many discussions with [my children’s] pediatricians, I have realized that the positives outweigh the negatives.”

Though it is important that children receive vaccines, there are some cases where a child’s immune system may not allow him to be vaccinated. This makes it even more important for those who have healthy children to vaccinate them. That way, when they come in contact with a child whose has an unhealthy immune system, the latter will not be at risk of contracting any diseases. This is known as herd immunity.

According to the Scandinavian Journal of Infectious Diseases, within the United States, the pneumonia vaccine was used to prevent 38,000 cases of childhood pneumonia, but with the herd immunity effect, about 109,000 cases of childhood pneumonia were prevented. Without vaccinating the able-bodied, children who cannot be vaccinated are at serious risk.

One of the major arguments against vaccination is the possibility of children developing autism after receiving the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine. According to the World Health Organization, a study done by the Global Advisory Committee on Vaccine Safety shows evidence that MMR vaccines are not related to autism.

Those who do believe that this link is present should know that Andrew Jeremy Wakefield, the doctor who conducted the initial “study” between the MMR vaccine and autism, was removed from the United Kingdom Medical Register after publishing a research paper with false information, according to the Canadian Society of Intestinal Research. Other researchers were unable to duplicate his study’s findings.

Parents need to realize that even though some diseases are very rare in this day and age, it is still possible for their children to contract them. According to the Center for Disease Control, about 99 children out of every 100 are protected against the two types of polio after receiving the vaccine.

The excuse that some diseases do not exist anymore is an invalid one. Children should be vaccinated against any and all diseases.

Although some may believe that their children are not at risk, according to the New York Department of Health, it is still required that students receive at least one dose of seven different vaccinations - including those to combat polio, MMR and varicella (chickenpox) - before entering pre-kindergarten. Those who choose not to do this put other children at risk.

What some people do not realize is that measles is starting to reappear at a rapid rate. According to United States Department of Health and Human Services secretary Alex Azar, as of April 24 of this year, there have been measles outbreaks in 22 states. If people do not see this as a bad thing, they are crazy.

It is easy to spread diseases. Even if people believe that their children are not at risk, it is still important to get them vaccinated.
Stop political degradation

by Heather Johnston

Political debates can be a fun, eye-opening experience, or they can be degrading and annoying. When it comes to class, there is no way, shape or form of debate that should demean students based on their political views.

This is especially true when teachers and staff inflict their ideologies onto middle and high school students. Just because they are adults doesn’t mean it’s their way or the highway.

Sophomore Jadniel Varela indicated that he has had his fair share of listening to teachers talk about their views without presenting both sides. Varela recalled an experience where he felt demeaned by a teacher, stating that a political joke spurred a staff member to lecture him.

“I didn’t think the joke was that bad,” Varela said. “But [the staff member] still disagreed sharply. It was unprofessional and made me uncomfortable.”

School is a place where students should get the chance to back up their opinions, not have an adult force their ideologies into the conversation.

It isn’t just high school staff that are doing a lousy job presenting both sides but college professors, too. A college student who wishes to remain anonymous indicated he feels awkward taking a stance after an experience he had with a professor.

He noted that he had made a comment on a current issue, and it didn’t end pleasantly. “After I made my comment, the professor jumped down my throat,” he said. “It made me not want to participate because I couldn't have my own opinion.”

Many high school and college students are having to put their opinions on the back burner because of teachers, staff and professors, and it just isn’t right.

Fortunately, there is a light to the end of this tunnel for students trying to escape this oppression: all that the adults have to do is stop pushing their political views onto the kids. This includes letting students have their own opinions in the classroom.

However, this doesn’t mean politics have to stay out of the classroom completely.

For history teachers Carrie McCausland and Collin Mulcahy, this means setting a good example. “[Teachers] should be modeling how to have informed opinions and to model appropriate reactions for when others disagree,” McCausland said.

High school principal Elizabeth Antolina indicated that keeping neutral is very important in a classroom setting. “Debates can help kids understand the political landscape of today’s world,” she said. “However, teachers need to be able to spur arguments without taking a side.”

Teachers and staff members should be presenting both sides and not trying to push their views on others, especially in a school environment. Adults have to be open and not biased to allow students the opportunity to generate their own opinions.

“Debates help kids to analyze, comprehend and make their own political choice,” Antolina said. “But that isn’t an excuse for adults to force their opinions in arguments.”

According to a survey from the Chicago Tribune, approximately 20% of students believe that it is not acceptable for teachers and staff members to share their political views in school.

Out of 29 Brocton high school students polled, 35% of them indicated that a staff member’s political bias makes them feel uncomfortable and/or that they cannot have their own opinion. One of the most popular responses to the survey was the idea that people can have their own ideas as long as they are not ignorant of others’ views.

“It’s not wrong to disagree with someone,” the anonymous college student said. “However, you need to be able to argue your point of view. You can’t just force your opinions onto someone else.”
Road to Braille has bumps

by Heather Johnston

Reading in Braille is part of everyday life for people with vision impairment. There is a lot that goes into creating even one paper or worksheet for students who are blind, but most people don’t know the amount of work it takes to turn a piece into Braille.

According to MaryAnn Oyer, teacher of the blind and visually impaired/orientation and mobility instructor, Brocton currently has four visually impaired students and several adults who help these students.

Oyer has been working with visually impaired students for 38 years. “Creating Braille pieces is something I have much experience in,” she said. “It’s more time-consuming and challenging than people realize.”

Braille is comprised of a system of six dots, 180 contractions and different codes for mathematics, literature, computers and even music. According to the American Foundation for the Blind, the six dots make up everything in Braille: letters of the alphabet, numbers, punctuation and anything else that one can write in print.

Learning to Braille requires knowing all the combinations, shortcuts and contractions, which is not a simple process. This can make learning Braille especially difficult. Teaching assistant Jessica Hornbuckle indicated that it took her about a year to learn basic literary codes for Braille and more time for a separate math code known as Nemith, but she still asks questions about contractions and codes.

Sophomore Andrew Mead-Colegrove, who is visually impaired indicated that learning Braille was a challenge, but he appreciates being able to read and write. “It wasn’t easy to do because there are so many components,” he said. He also noted that it took him about two years to learn Braille because of its complexity. “It’s a lot to remember, but at this point it comes naturally.”

Different combinations of these dots make up everything in the language of Braille. For example, dot 1 alone represents the letter “a” in Braille. Similarly, dots 1, 4 and 5 represent “d” and dots 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 create the letter “x.”

However, it isn’t that simple. Because it takes up so much space, there are nearly 200 contractions for different words and parts of words. Words such as “can,” “do” and “but” all have single-letter contractions. To illustrate, the word “can” is shortened to just dots 1 and 4, which is also the letter “c,” and “but” is shortened to just the letter “b,” dots 1 and 2.

It goes further than short words and articles, though. Take the word “grandmother” as an example. Someone typing in Braille would first type “g” then “t” followed by the contraction “and” then the contraction for “mother.”

On top of all this, there are multiple codes for math, literature, computers and music. Each of these codes have different symbols that are represented by the same six dots.

Learning to Braille requires knowing all the combinations, shortcuts and contractions, which is not a simple process.

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According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, most families today are structured around the concept that both parents work, therefore leaving little time to interact with their children. Many times, children are unsupervised by their caregivers, so they are left to their own devices as they discover how to entertain themselves during their time away from school. Such things may result in a child being exposed to adult content.

Television, Internet, video games and cellphones are easily accessible to children but can lead to misinformation, confusion and curiosity about what they are watching.

Children are subjected to hundreds of sexualized messages everyday which can be explicit and demeaning, and many times, parents and children are unaware of what is happening. According to Common Sense Media, the average child from age eight to 12 spends about six hours a day in front of an electronic device. The same source also stated that during this time, approximately half of that time is spent unsupervised.

According to the World Health Organization, some children want to be like the heroes they see on their devices in how they dress and look, how they talk and how they relate to others. This can lead to sexually inappropriate clothing, language and advances they do not understand but are paramount to popularity and acceptance. Left unattended, it can lead to bullying and hurtful sexual behavior towards other children.

The WHO also recommends that children receive sex education around the age of 12. Brocton offers classes in fifth, seventh and 10th grade with the option for parents to opt out their children. Within such classes, there is a unit about adult content. “It is important for the children to get to know the facts,” health teacher Maria Sigeti said.

YWCA community educator Wende Lescynski is a guest teacher whom Sigeti brings in to talk to the children in health class about adult content. “Adult content affects young children by giving them a false idea of a relationship,” Lescynski said. “Media and song lyrics are also things that can affect a child’s mind, whether that is by giving them a bad idea of a relationship or exposing them to pornography.”

“Adult content can have many effects on a child’s actual brain. According to Lescynski, viewing pornography causes the brain to produce more of the endorphin dopamine, which is a chemical in the brain that acts as a transmitter by carrying signals between nerve cells and the brain.

Dopamine is the chemical that is most closely tied with emotions and addiction, specifically the feeling of excitement. Even after the first session, the brain will begin to crave dopamine.

According to Project KNOW, this can lead to a pornographic addiction which may evolve into more serious issues such as neglecting intimate relationships, financial problems and webcam sexual activities.

High school principal Elizabeth Antolina said that being exposed to adult content is an issue that affects Brocton students. “They know about topics at ages where they aren’t ready developmentally,” she said. “Some are experimenting at early ages because they are curious about different topics. This is why knowledge about this is crucial.”

Antolina also suggested that parents should be aware of the dangers and take measures to prevent issues from developing. “Parents should monitor social media and TV choices,” she said. “Apps are available, and there should be agreements about no hidden secrets such as passwords. Parents shouldn’t shy away from uncomfortable questions. Talk to your children.”
BOCES prepares students for multiple careers

by Torrie Lindstrom and Courtney Tobias

For many years, the Erie 2-Chautauqua-Cattaraugus BOCES LoGuidice Educational Center in Fredonia has been providing training programs for students. BOCES has a variety of classes for students to choose from, including Automotive Technology and Criminal Justice as well as Sports Conditioning and Exercise Science, which is a new program this year.

There are a handful of juniors and seniors testing out the new program. According to a BOCES informational packet, it provides students with the opportunity to learn the science of human health and how to design exercise and conditioning programs. Students are able to work out almost daily in a fitness center and have class in a different room for paper and computer work.

After the students take this program for the required two years, they will have the chance to earn a certification in athletic training, physical therapy and much more.

According to Brocton junior Megan Gloss, she chose this program so that she could pursue a career in the medical field. “It is meant to prepare you to be a professional trainer, athletic coach, physical therapist or even an orthopedic specialist,” she said. “I would like to be an orthopedic surgeon or a sideline athletic assistant for a professional team.”

Brocton senior Jordan Krystofiak took Construction Technology at BOCES his junior year but then transferred to the Sports Conditioning and Exercise Science program for his senior year. “I had my construction credentials, so they said I could do this for one year and still meet the requirements I need to graduate,” he said. “I felt it would have been best if I did something that I love to do, and this program is just that.”

The instructor for this program, Anibal Lopez, indicated this is his first year of teaching. “I’ve been a strength and conditioning professional and personal trainer for 15 years,” he said. “I currently still train clients.” Lopez also indicated he is excited to teach this program for years to come.

Another program which students can study is Automotive Technology, which is directed by instructor Mike LoManto. It teaches students in the program how to work with vehicles and how to repair them. They will also get to experience an automotive shop environment.

LoManto indicated that he teaches his students how to become good employees for their career jobs and teaches them skills they can use for life. “We use computer skills for homework vocab and automotive research and repair,” he said. “As for careers, I have several students working as technicians and in sales and parts. One student went on to be a pharmacist, and another is flying jets for the Air Force.”

LoManto indicated that he has been teaching this course for 25 years. “I was an ASE certified automotive technician,” he said. “I worked for Dutch Burgess Chevrolet after graduating from the Automotive Technology program at LoGuidice Vo Tech.”

He also suggested that students in this program can attend colleges after completing this program and earn credits. “I have an articulation agreement with colleges. The number of credits earned depends on the student and college,” he said.

According to Smith, this program can sometimes be challenging. “Some subjects I won’t really know, but I’ll learn them enough to master them,” he said.

After graduating, students can get an ASE certification. “Students can also pay $30 to take the ASE automotive testing to receive ASE certifications,” LoManto said. Jobs that students in this course can look into include automotive, electric automotive and working on air conditioners and heaters for vehicles.

Students interested in taking these courses should visit the guidance office and speak with counselors Robert Wright and Kayde Putcher or check out the BOCES website.
**MENTAL HEALTH**  
(Cont’d from page 7)

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services mentioned other ways to maintain a positive mental health, including getting professional help, connecting with others, being physically active, helping others, getting enough sleep and developing coping skills.

Brocton nurse Jennifer Rammelt indicated that having a positive mental state is very important and that she is happy students have more options to reach out now if they need help. “The key to staying mentally healthy is eating right, getting enough sleep, exercising, being supported by family and school staff, sticking to a routine and making sure to have fun when time allows,” she said.

Having good mental balance was also stressed by Integrated Pediatric Mental Health. Research shows that a positive state of mind increases people’s openness. People with more positive emotions are more willing to try new things and open up to others, and this connects greatly to one’s ability to be resilient. It is shown that these kinds of people are able to recover from situations of trauma and conflict that can be mentally straining.

Social worker Amber Nickerson said that focusing on mental health is important to living a healthy life. She indicated that self-care is very important. “Taking time for yourself and using mindfulness techniques and partaking in things you enjoy is essential,” she said. “Never allow yourself to feel trapped and alone. Always reach out for help.”

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**BRAILLE**  
(Cont’d from page 11)

Touch machine.

The BrailleNote Touch is an iPad-sized device which students can carry with them. It has multiple features that allow visually impaired students to read online documents, take notes and search the Internet, all of this by using their fingertips.

After deciding which form she wants to create the documents, Leone starts to Braille, then makes diagrams. There is no exact formula to making a diagram, and each comes out a little differently. By using multiple materials such as puffy paint, raised dots and textured tape, visually impaired students can feel the different aspects of the diagram.

“Diagrams are what take up most of the time,” Leone said. “However, I enjoy the process.” She indicated that creating diagrams gives her a chance to be creative, and they normally aren’t too difficult.

Once she is done with the diagrams, she works on ink by using multiple materials such as puffy paint, raised dots and textured tape, visually impaired students can feel the different aspects of the diagram.

By using multiple materials such as puffy paint, raised dots and textured tape, visually impaired students can feel the different aspects of the diagram. Preparing documents in Braille for visually impaired students for about three and a half years. “It’s a labor of love for sure,” she said. “[Oyer] and I have to reproduce anything that crosses a student’s desk in Braille, but I love being able to help these students.”

Hornbuckle indicated that it is important to take a student’s learning style into the equation. She noted that diagrams and worksheets are sometimes modified slightly to help meet a visually impaired student’s needs, and each student is different. “We want to provide an equal education,” she said. “It is important to take into consideration the students themselves and help them however we can.”

According to the New York State Education Department, there are multiple accommodations that are allowed to be made for students with vision impairment. When it comes to state testing and Regents exams, the students receive the same assistance that they have in the classroom.

Leone indicated that the level of assistance and modification is altered to match the student. “They wouldn’t be asked to draw something or look in a microscope, for example,” she said. “But there has to be continuity between what the student experiences in the classroom and how they take their state exams.”

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On April 16, the Brocton Trap Club shot at the Westfield Fish and Game Club. They did not face anyone, but their shooting scores counted towards their overall statistics in the end of the year.

This season, the Brocton team shoots against Frewsburg, Maple Grove, Cassadaga Valley, Clymer, Sherman, Chautauqua Lake, Westfield and Panama. Regularly the Brocton team shoots with the Chautauqua Lake and Westfield teams but are not necessarily on the same team. The team always shoots on Tuesdays.

“We haven’t been doing as well as we have in previous years,” adviser Brian Hornbuckle said. “However, we have many young shooters, so there is a lot of growing room. I am really expecting them to become very good shooters in the upcoming games and seasons.”

The April 16 match began with freshman Joshua Bigelow, who scored 15 out of 25 clay pigeons. This was the second best for the day.

Next up was seventh grader Matthew Steward who shot eight of the clay pigeons. The next shooter was the best shooter of the day, seventh grader Aiden Gatto, who shot 17 clay pigeons.

The matches continued with sophomore Zack Halpainy who shot 10 and senior Kaitlyn Matonic who shot 13. Her score was the fourth best overall for this set.

Next up was sophomore Tyler Schrader and seniors Joey Kuschel and Josh Powell who scored 11, seven and 13 respectively. “This was not my best round of shooting, but I am still improving and have two more years,” Schrader said. “We still have multiple shoots coming up, and the entire team is improving.”

Freshman Conner Utegg was next and shot 14, which was the third best shooting score of the match. He was followed by freshman Grace Sunday with 10 and the last shooter, junior Devin Bigelow, with three. Overall, the team scored a 103 at this shoot, the score determined by the top 10 shooters.

There are many different things that make up the trap team and help it function. Parental involvement is one of those things. “There is so much parental involvement that is really great for the kids and their growth,” volunteer Robert Wright said. “Parents help keep a safe environment and provide positive influences for young shooters. They provide a layer of safety, and it’s refreshing to see people doing stuff for their kids.”

“Parents help keep a safe environment and provide positive influences for young shooters. They provide a layer of safety, and it’s refreshing to see people doing stuff for their kids.”

Friendships among the team members is also important, according to Utegg. “We are all becoming close friends, so we are very happy to be shooting with each other and overall practicing and improving,” he said.

Trap Club has only one more match remaining that will continue to affect their overall score. That match is on May 21.
Bulldogs dominate Wolverines

by Madeline Brogan

In a home game against the Westfield Wolverines on April 4, the Brocton Bulldogs varsity baseball team came out on top with a final score of 11-1. The game ended in the fifth inning due to the 10-run limit rule, and nine out of the 11 runs scored by the Bulldogs were RBIs.

Brocton senior pitcher Ronald Brown said he was satisfied with how the team played even though they started off a little shaky. “I feel like we played very well,” he said. “It was our first game of the season, so I feel like we came out with nerves, but we overcame that after the first inning.”

The Wolverines started the game by putting a run on the scoreboard. Westfield senior Mikey Johnson hit a single in the first at-bat of the game. Next, junior Dylan Scriven had a hit, making it to second base on an error and advancing Johnson to third.

Brown then walked one batter and struck out two. Johnson made it home shortly after. However, Scriven was tagged by junior shortstop Caleb Chelton and called out.

Brocton then went up to bat, beginning with senior Jordan Krystofiak who made it to second on an error by the right fielder. After a caught pop fly hit by senior Riley Rivera, Chelton went up to bat and was hit by a pitch. Brown struckout shortly after.

Senior Derrick Burns then hit a double, sending both Krystofiak and Chelton home and tallying two RBIs. Senior Darien Booker had a hit, but Burns was tagged for the third out as he headed from second. At the end of the first, the Bulldogs were up 2-1.

When the Wolverines stepped up to bat in the second inning, the Bulldogs quickly took them down. Brown struck out two, and Burns caught a ball hit to left field.

The Bulldogs, on the other hand, went on a scoring frenzy. After a walk, junior Michael Steward made it to first off an error on the left fielder. After another walk, Krystofiak hit a single due to an error on the shortstop. Rivera then made it to second base, tallying two more RBIs.

With Krystofiak on third and Rivera on second, Chelton hit a single, making the bases loaded. Brown then hit a single and sent Krystofiak home.

Head coach Robert Fetterick explained that the mistakes made by the Bulldogs in the beginning allowed them to improve their game. “We made some critical errors in the first inning,” he said. “I feel that having a few mistakes early in the game allowed us to refocus our minds and pick back up the game plan.”

In the third inning, Brocton’s defense shut down the Wolverines yet again. Freshman second baseman Ryan Laurito threw to first for the first out, then Brown got his fifth strikeout of the game. Krystofiak earned the third out by throwing the ball to Booker after dropping the third strike.

Brocton did not score in the third inning as there were three quick outs. Steward struck out, and junior Gabe Morello made it to first after an error by the second baseman. Krystofiak was then hit by a pitch, advancing Morello to second. Scriven contributed to a double play after catching a ball and throwing Morello out at second.

The Wolverines kept struggling offensively in the fourth. Senior Brock Schuster hit the ball, making it to first off an error on Chelton. Senior Colby Bills also hit a single followed by junior Nate Culbreth hitting a pop fly that was caught. Brown then walked one batter and struck out two more.

In the bottom of the fourth, the Bulldogs could not find their groove. Chelton grounded the ball to the pitcher who threw him out at first. Brown and Burns then followed with two pop flies to center field.

In the final inning, the Wolverines still could not get another run on the board. Booker fielded the ball and touched first base for the first out. Another strikeout and a walk came from Brown. Bills then hit the ball to center fielder Rivera for the third out.

Brocton finished the game in the bottom of the fifth. Booker, junior Nick Putcher and Morello were walked, and Steward struck out. Krystofiak made it to first on an error by the shortstop and sent Booker home.

Rivera made his mark yet again with a hit, sending Putcher and Morello home. These runs gave the Bulldogs a 10-run lead, causing the umpire to call the game early.

Fetterick explained that Rivera was voted player of the game. “It was nice to see guys like Riley Rivera and Michael Steward really come alive at the plate,” he said. “Riley had some crucial hits, three RBIs for the day, a nice two-RBI double, and that’s what we’re looking for.”

He said the team played well for their first league game. “We knew going in we needed to hit the ball hard and have Westfield try to make plays. I thought we ran the bases well and were aggressive at times,” he said.

“Maybe we would’ve tried to bunt a little more, especially as we were up, just to work on some skills and things we’re going to need later in the year.”

Fetterick also indicated that the team’s league games are hard to predict. “I think a team like Clymer-Sherman that is now merged together can be kind of scary,” he said. “They’ve had success in other programs, so they’re kind of that unknown team.”

Maple Grove is also a new team in the Bulldogs’ league. “Again, they’re an unknown team and bigger school,”

JUNIOR CALEB CHELTON makes it to second base while Westfield senior Brock Schuster fields the ball. Brocton won by a score of 11-1.
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Falcons fly away with ‘W’

by Laura Johnston

On April 11, the girls’ varsity softball team took a tumble in the dirt on their home field against the Falconer Golden Falcons. The final score was 11-6. The leading hitter for Brocton was junior Jenelle Grigelevich with a single, double and a triple. Adding to Grigelevich’s 3 for 4 up to bat was sophomore Juli Smith’s home run.

The game began with the Lady Falcons up to bat. Falconer junior Alex Rivera grounded the ball to Smith at first, who threw it for the out at first.

Smith indicated that she was very happy with her performance at shortstop. “I really do not have a lot of confidence at short,” she said. “However, I still got the balls where they needed to go.”

The third batter for Falconer was sophomore Nicole Youngberg. She hit a pop fly in between center and left field for a double and an RBI, making the score 1-0 for Falconer.

Smith began the offensive action for Brocton by bombing the ball out to left field for a homerun and an RBI, making the score 2-1 in Brocton’s favor.

Brocton junior Megan Gloss said that Smith’s home run was one of the highlights of the game. “When Juli got her home run, I was on first. The ball went so high and far, it was crazy,” she said. “I was just screaming out of excitement as I was running home.”

Smith agreed that her home run was very exhilarating. “I was so excited because it was the first home run that I’ve had this season,” she said. “Our team’s hitting is one of our major strengths this year.”

The top of the second inning began with Falconer freshman Emily Melquist popping it up to right field for a double and also an RBI, bringing the score to 2-2.

Brocton’s first batter for the bottom of the second inning was Grigelevich. She hit a triple, brought freshman Angie Rexford home, slid into third then got up and ran home on a throwing error. The score became 4-2 in Brocton’s favor.

“I knew right when I hit it that it was good because it felt like butter,” Grigelevich said. “It’s a great feeling when you get a solid hit.”

Youngberg started the top of the third inning by launching the ball into right field for a homerun and an RBI. The score then became 5-4 in Brocton’s favor.

While Brocton pushed ahead in the first three innings, they were not able to hold the lead. The top of the fourth began with the Lady Bulldogs making two quick outs. Brocton junior Cheyanna Rivera caught Falconer junior Tesika Kilmer’s pop fly, and Melquist struck out.

Brocton senior Annalise Wdowiasz indicated that this was her favorite game moment. “It was close at this point,” she said. “That double out was the highlight of the game.”

The bottom of the third inning, Grigelevich came up to the plate, hit a double to right field and earning an RBI. The score then became 6-5.

In the bottom of the third inning, Gloss indicated that this time around the girls need to improve is not making mental errors during the game. “We have made some errors this year, but it is much improved from the years past.”

To finish off the seventh inning, Brocton made three errors which allowed for three more runs for Falconer, making the score 11-5.

Gloss indicated that this time during the game was difficult. “The seventh inning was hard to get out of, but we still put up a good fight.”

During the bottom of the seventh inning, Gloss was the only girl to make it home, ending the game with a final score of 11-6.

Throughout the game, Gloss threw 108 pitches, and Falconer sophomore Ashley Pierce threw 113. Overall, Brocton had four errors during the game, one in the first inning and three in the seventh. Falconer had no errors.

Gloss indicated that this game was a hard loss, but as of today, her team has a shot at being number one in the division. “Looking back on the Falconer game, I know that my teammates and I can agree that we are stronger as a whole and better than the mental errors we experienced,” she said. “We are fully capable of winning the rest of our games for the season.”

The girls’ current overall record is 8 and 6.
Fetterick said. “We’re going to have our hands full, but we’re a confident ball team to go out and get the job done.”

Booker said that the team has skills to improve upon this season. “I feel like we can get better with our confidence and attitudes,” he explained. “We need to get better communication and start hitting the ball.”

Besides the small mistakes, Fetterick talked about how strong the team is. “We definitely have pitching, and experience is a big thing this year,” he said.

Brown agreed, saying that with the majority of the team returning, experience is a strength. “The team works great together,” Brown explained. “We have been playing together since we were all kids, so we know how to work together well, and we all get along together and are always having fun.”

At practice, the team focuses on helping each other and staying together. “We talk about it a lot at practice, our resilience to not let failures get to us,” Fetterick said. “We pick each other up and help one another. Keeping our minds focused on what we need to do and the task at hand is really a strength that we have developed throughout the year.”

Coming off of a successful season, Fetterick does not want the boys getting ahead of themselves. “We don’t want to look too far forward because then our focus is going to get towards the end of the year and not on what the task at hand is. With this team, we can be our own worst enemies,” he explained. “We take every game, game by game, everyday, practice by practice, and that’s our motto. They have bright futures, and we’re hoping that come the end of the year, we can duplicate the success that happened last year.”
The Brocton-Westfield track team performed in several different events on April 9 in Frewsburg. The athletes ran different types of races such as relays, middle and long distances, hurdles, and long jumps. The overall score was 63-67, with the Frewsburg Bears taking the slight lead.

According to the boys’ head coach Lon Knappenberger, there were seven first places that the team took that day: Westfield junior Ryan Jafarjian took two firsts in the 100 and 200.

Also securing first place finishes were Westfield senior Noah Smith in discus, Backus in the 400 and Baribeau in shot put as well as Westfield sophomore Darren Morse in the 110 and 400 hurdles.

The boys took seven thirds as well, including Westfield senior Anthony Spann for the 100, Westfield sophomore Logan Miles for the 400 and the triple jump, Brocton junior Isaac Weaver for the 3,200, Stephenson for the log jump, and Westfield freshman Kyle Douglas for both shot put and discus.

The girls’ team took seven first places: Westfield sophomore Jamie Black in the 100 hurdles, Westfield junior Mckayla Wolfe in both the 400 hurdles and in high jump, Westfield junior Savannah Lashbrook in the 3,000-meter and Westfield senior Paige Nichols in shot put.

The girls’ team also took eight second place finishes: Nichols in discus, Lashbrook in the 3,000, Brocton junior Mary Conklin in the 200, Westfield sophomore Sophie Devlin and Mortimer in the triple jump.

The team also took five seconds: Westfield senior Noah Smith in discus, Backus in the 400 and Baribeau in shot put as well as Westfield sophomore Darren Morse in the 110 and 400 hurdles.

The boys took seven thirds as well, including Westfield senior Anthony Spann for the 100, Westfield sophomore Logan Miles for the 400 and the triple jump, Brocton junior Isaac Weaver for the 3,200, Stephenson for the log jump, and Westfield freshman Kyle Douglas for both shot put and discus.

“Looking at times and distances on paper, I predicted that we would place in the 1,600 and win two of the three relays,” he said. “This would have tied the meet at 70-70. I believe that if the meet was later in the season, the result would have been different.”

Lashbrook, the Westfield captain, indicated that she has been on the varsity track team since seventh grade. “I want to take at least 20 seconds off my current time this season in the 1,500,” she said.

Knappenberger also indicated that they have a team saying. “Our 2019 motto is ‘What you do defines you.’ We let this guide everything we do. You can’t define yourself as tough and then give up. We ‘fail forward.’ We learn from our mistakes and use them to advance.”

The coach of the girls’ team, John Jafarjian, indicated that he is new to coaching track as this is his first year. “The girls have been very patient with me,” he said. “I think that the girls have a great attitude, and I have seen them go out of their way to help each other throughout the season.”

Conklin indicated that she participated in four different events: the 100, 200, 4x100 and the 4x400. “I got 13.8 seconds in the 100 and beat my personal record of 14.8,” she said.

She also indicated that she joined track in ninth grade, only attending two meets and later dropping the sport. “I dropped because I joined an AAU team, which is a travel basketball team,” she said. “I felt AAU would be more fun than track for me, and the coach was very tough, and this year is still difficult but not as difficult. I think I could work on coming out the blocks better and staying down for the first 10 meters.”

WESTFIELD JUNIOR RYAN Jafarjian pushes hard in a relay race. On April 9, the Brocton-Westfield team lost in Frewsburg by four points with a score of 63-67. There are five Brocton students on the team.