

PORT CHESTER & RYE BROOK

38 Broad Street
Port Chester, NY 10573

Westmore NEWS

Tel: 914-939-6864
Fax: 914-939-6877

Pride of Port Chester salutes America

By [Casey Watts](#), Reporter

Thursday, August 31, 2017 1:10 AM



It isn't band camp if the weather isn't working against the students – neither the heat nor the rain can stop this musical troupe. Senior baritone player Lauren Pellegrini practices her solo while her fellow Pride of Port Chester band mates practice their steps on the Crawford Park field on Tuesday, Aug. 29. Their set this year is "American Salute," Elvis Presley's "The American Trilogy" and "God Bless the U.S.A."

By Casey Watts



Leading the trumpet section is senior William Brakewood. He is tackling one of the set's solos.

Casey Watts Westmore News

The Port Chester High School marching band is ready to show off its star-spangled pride during this year's American-themed set. The students were hard at work from Monday, Aug. 21 to Thursday, Aug. 31 learning their footwork and memorizing the three new songs. They are performing "American Salute," Elvis Presley's "The American Trilogy" and "God Bless the U.S.A."

The band fought against the heat the first week on the field behind Port Chester Middle School. The second week brought cooler temperatures, but rain loomed in the forecast, making Tuesday a rush to beat the storm. Although it was a tough two weeks and one of their drum majors, senior Santiago Bautista, was out due to an illness, the kids let nothing stop them.

Drum major Grace Simmons is ready for the challenge of directing a 150-strong student band, including the guard.

"I think we have a good group," the rising senior said. "It's a lot of freshmen and a lot of learning, but it will be good." She also commented that having a large band packed with young blood will mean they can develop a stronger core for years to come.

Former longtime Band Director Bob Vitti is heavily involved in the show. He started putting it together last year and didn't let his health slow him down.

"I was working on this from my hospital bed," said the now part-time instructional support specialist for the music department.

Vitti, who has been working regularly with the kids during the mornings of band camp, looked over to the field from the Crawford Park pavilion with a smile on his face.

"I'm proud of them," he said about the students. "They have a lot of work to do, but they'll get there."

Band Director Mike Miceli is in charge of the marching band this year. He was not available to comment while working with the students and did not respond to a request for an interview before deadline on Wednesday, Aug. 30.

The band's first performance was for parents and family members on Thursday, Aug. 31 at Crawford Park as the culmination of band camp. They will be performing next at homecoming on Tuesday, Sept. 16 at Port Chester High School's Ryan Stadium. Their first competition is on Saturday, Sept. 23 at Naugatuck High School in Naugatuck, Conn.