

Marching band ready to shine in Sunshine State

By Jennifer Weil

It's the best Christmas present Lenny Carriero has ever gotten.

Next Monday, he and the rest of The Port Chester High School marching band will be heading to Miami to perform in front of thousands of spectators at the 2003 FedEx Orange Bowl football halftime extravaganza.

The Orange Bowl, which features the Iowa Hawkeyes and the Southern California Trojans, will be nationally televised Thursday, Jan. 2 at 8 p.m. It is the first national bowl tournament the marching band has played in since the Rose Bowl in 1970.

"It's not every day that you go down with all your friends to Florida and perform at a halftime show and be in a parade," said Carriero, a 14-year-old freshman who plays the baritone. "It's going to be really cool."

The 115-member "Pride of Port Chester," which includes 90 musicians and 25 color guards, is the only band in the Northeast selected to participate in the event. Reggae-pop star



Photos courtesy Len Savanella

The Port Chester marching band will take to the field at the Orange Bowl.

Shaggy, country music sister-act SHeDAISY, rock sensation Default and internationally acclaimed Latin Grammy winners Juanes and Olga

Tanon are also scheduled to perform.

"This is not something that you do easily," said Len Savanella, whose 17-year-old twin daughters, Vickie and

Lizzie, are in the marching band and the color guard. "This is a big deal."

Besides the halftime show, the band will take part in a field competition with 11 other bands from across the country and in The Junior Orange Bowl Parade in Coral Gables on Dec. 31.

"I can't tell you the buzz that is floating around this village these days with this great honor," said Port Chester Mayor Gerald Logan. "I am looking forward to New Year's Day watching the Orange Bowl, so I can see our band come out on the field. I mean, it's before a national audience. I mean, what better thing could happen to a bunch of kids in a band?"

Because the district only provides for the band's equipment and red and navy uniforms, the students had to raise about \$115,000 dollars for their travel and lodging expenses.

The students, who each had a \$920 fund-raising quota, sold advertising in the band's magazine, distributed fliers seeking donations, per-

formed at events, held a charity dinner and sold 4,200 cases of Florida oranges and grapefruits.

Senior trumpet player Anthony Alvarado sold 170 cases of oranges, the most by any band member.

"They were really juicy this year," he laughed. "They were great. They were worth the money."

But it wasn't until the end of October that the band knew that they were definitely going to go to the game.

"At one point we thought that we weren't going to go because the funds just weren't coming in," said band president Dominic Carriero, the father of Lenny. "We really stretched it as far as we could go and then all of a sudden, things just fell in to place."

What put the band over the top were three \$5,000 grants, including one from the Port Chester village manager Michael Murphy.

"Working hard for four years to get something as big as this is pretty cool," Alvarado said. "This is our year to shine down in Florida."

Dining Out