

Fundraising, community support allow PCHS Band to fly to Miami

By Jananne Abel

Port Chester High School Band parents and members received good news this week: the musical group will be flying rather than taking a bus to Miami for the Orange Bowl.

At the PCHS Band parents meeting Monday night, Nov. 25, Band Director Robert Vitti painted the scenario for the 24-hour bus trip, explaining where the busses would be stopping to change drivers.

Band Association President Domenic Carriero arrived late, following presentations by representatives from Hudson Valley Bank who handed over a check for \$5,000 and by a Rye Brook member of the Junior League of Westchester on the Sound who gave Treasurer Mary Ann Giorgi the woman's group's \$1,000 donation.

In addition, Con Edison will present a \$5,000 check to the band at next week's school board meeting.

"The band has raised a significant amount and the community has been very generous and hopefully tomorrow we can change our travel plans from a bus to a plane,"



Dan Colangelo, Hudson Valley Bank vice president and manager of the Port Chester branch, presents a \$5,000 check to Port Chester High School Band Association Vice President Steve Mitchell. John DiGiorgio, bank vice president and a representative of the Hudson Valley Bank Foundation, witnesses the transaction.

said Carriero.

A cheer went up from the band parents gathered at the meeting.

"It took a lot of work trying to figure out how we can pull it off," said Carriero, who announced that by flying the band would be able to leave on Dec. 30 rather than Dec. 29.

The football game is on Jan. 2, with a competition, rehearsal for the halftime show and parade on Dec. 31 and dress rehearsal with

the other 14 participating bands on Jan. 1.

"I was very excited," said Band Vice President Rich Giorgi upon learning of the change of transportation plans. "I was very happy that we weren't going to have to take the busses. I thought it was good the kids finally did their fundraising. They finally woke up so we wouldn't have to spend 30 hours on a bus."

Please turn to page 16

PCHS Band to fly to Miami Continued from page 1

When the band heard the news from Mr. Vitti Tuesday morning, "they were all pretty relieved that we didn't have that long trip ahead of us." There was no cheering, Giorgi said, "but everybody was definitely happy."

Other significant contributions helping to make plane travel possible have come from an anonymous donor (\$2,500), the Chris

Foundation (\$2,000), Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Ravikoff (\$1,000), the PCHS Class of 1952 (\$1,100), G&S Port Chester (\$1,000), and the Ernest Simons Building at 181 Westchester Ave. (\$1,000).

This year's band journal will be 325 pages, up significantly from last year, \$3,957 has been raised through donations dropped in orange jugs placed at various stores and restaurants in Port Chester and Rye Brook, and 3,500 cases of oranges and grapefruit—a record number—have been sold.

"The money has just been rolling in," said Business Manager Phil Gasparini. He noted that a lot of out-of-towners have been sending in checks. Those have been in response to newspaper articles and an editorial asking for help.

"It's just totally turned around," said Gasparini. "The kids have been on fire." He noted that there is no band member who has not raised at least \$100 and that some have raised significantly more than their quota of \$960, with one member bringing in \$2,700.

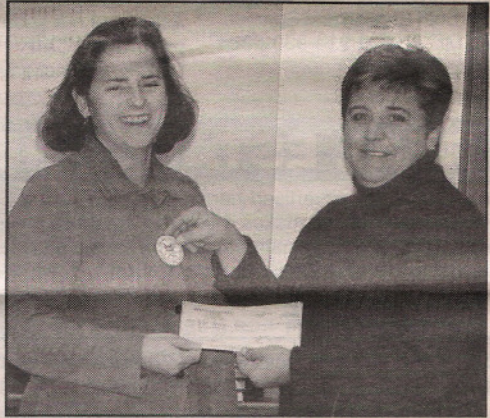
"Mr. Gasparini said fundraising was excellent, there were tons of fruit slips, band journal ads and donations coming in," said Giorgi. "The kids were doing a lot of work."

"We're getting more and more excited as time goes on," said the business manager. "We want to make this 100%."

In addition, \$60,000 in grants has been received or promised.

Port Chester Schools Superintendent Dr. Charles Coletti and the Port Chester Board of Education have promised to guarantee any money the band is pledged but may be short so it can pay for the travel packages, said Vitti.

"This is the big trip," noted Gasparini. "I am well pleased at the response over the last two months. Sometimes you have to be a little bit tough to get things moving."



Eliza Szwajkowski of Rye Brook, a member of the Junior League of Westchester on the Sound, gives PCHS Band Association Treasurer Maryann Giorgi the woman's group's \$1,000 donation. Giorgi in turn pins a "Band Angel" pin on Szwajkowski.

He had painted a bleak picture to the kids two months ago that they would not be able to make the trip at all if fundraising didn't pick up significantly.

The Band Association agreed that they would have parents of band members short of quota sign promissory notes to come up with the rest of the money by May. However, there was a consensus that all 130 members should go to Florida so there would be no holes in the field show lineup.

"It's important that the whole band go," said Paul Gerardi. "If we have the money, they should all go. Otherwise the show is not a show and it penalizes the other kids."

"We're only about \$16,000 short of quota now," said Gasparini. "It's really a small push to get us over the hump."

The band's budget is usually around \$150-\$160,000. The cost for the trip to the Orange Bowl is adding \$100,000 to that figure.

"This is the biggest trip we'll take in 50 years," concluded Vitti.