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PCHS Band could help bring back school spirit

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I write this opinion with very strong trepidation and concern that it might be construed that I am knocking an organization that has very strong roots in our community which is also the pride of our community, the Port Chester High School Marching Band. Let me start of by saying that the marching band is truly awesome. They demonstrate such tremendous dedication and work ethic that is truly paramount. They practice and practice like no other organization or varsity team. When they are not practicing, they are competing and when they are not competing, they are marching. When they are not marching, they are fundraising. True dedication and commitment that not only can our children learn lessons from but we as adults, too. I cannot forget to mention the parents of the band members who also put in almost the same effort and support as their children do.

So, what is my point? My point is that a core value and purpose has been lost. I was always under the impression that the primary purpose of the marching band was to support and be part of school traditional activities and programs, especially the varsity home football games. It is the one prime time of year to showcase their talents and ability in front of their peers, student body and community. To be the main rallying cry instrument for school spirit and pride.

Have you been to a varsity home football game lately? Very few fans come out to the games. The cheering section predominantly consists of the players' and cheerleaders' parents. What was once a tradition for our student body and community to come out and support the team, socialize as a community and watch the band perform at halftime is almost lost. The community support and student body are lacking in numbers. Sadly to date the football team has had one more win (2) than the band has made it to home games this season.

I believe the band can singlehandedly start to change the atmosphere of the home football games. They can be the catapult to bring back school sprit and camaraderie to our community that at one time was neither matched nor surpassed by any surrounding community. Competitions are great, but I have to imagine school pride is stronger. Marching down a street in a parade is neat, being in a movie is cool, participating in a bowl game is impressive, but marching and playing in your own stadium in front of schoolmates, peers, family, friends and YOUR community has to be AWESOME. We sometimes wonder where the school spirit and sense of community have gone, but we do not try to reel it back in and promote it.

If the intent is to have a fragmented student body and community, so be it. But if we are looking to bring back our pride and spirit along with sense of community, it is the little things that can be done that will bring it back. We have so few events that we all go out and participate in as a community. We have the 4th of July fireworks, Port Chester Day and the Columbus Day Parade. So as parents and members of the community, let's band together and encourage, support and work to gain our sense of pride and community back.

I challenge the student body to come out and support their teams. I challenge us as parents to encourage our children to participate and support school events. If you have a neighbor or friend who has a child that plays a sport or participates in the band, come out and support them. Lastly, I challenge the band to not only come out to the games and march but also to have fun. Show off your talents when you are in the stands waiting for halftime; get the fans into the game. Bring back the sense of admiration and bravado to our



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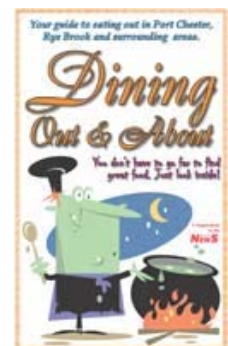
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stadium which is so missed and long overdue.

Philip Mutino
Rye Brook

The writer is a parent in the Port Chester School District.

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