

Newsday

# Llife

INSIDE  
THE WEEK  
AHEAD  
E15



# PLAY ON!

BEHIND THE SCENES WITH  
THE GREEN MACHINE,  
BRENTWOOD'S AWARD-WINNING  
MARCHING BAND **PHOTO ESSAY** | E4

act2 | A holiday gift guide for the older generation E25



# 'Doing right' in Brentwood



**ON THE COVER** Members of the Green Machine during rehearsal at Brentwood High.

**B**rentwood's High School marching band has won three state championships and scores of local titles since its inception more than four decades ago. The 146-member Green Machine is the face of the school and the community, says band director Joe Sitler (Brentwood '89). Newsday's Alejandra Villa Loarca conceived the idea for these photos and her short documentary "Green Machine" after

PHOTOS BY  
**Alejandra Villa Loarca**

spending two years documenting gang violence that has brought national attention. "I saw that with all the negativity, the marching band is a beacon of hope," says Villa Loarca. "It's one of the solutions to the problem of violence. This is one of the things Brentwood is doing right." She

spent months with the band, including in the run-up to the state Field Band Conference Championships in October in Syracuse. Competing in the annual event is the culmination of years of work for many students. "We love what we do," said saxophone section leader Lisa Manbodh, a senior. "We will be together to make it come alive for this final show. Every person in the audience knows who we are." — ROSEMARY OLANDER, LI LIFE EDITOR



The color guard, one-third of the Green Machine, visually interprets the music through dance and such props as flags.

The Green Machine, which begins practicing in July, gets ready for its Annual Band Show in September. "I tell parents flat-out, 'From July to October, I am going to know your children better than you do,'" director Joe Sitler says.

■ Video: [newsday.com/lilife](https://newsday.com/lilife)



Ruben Nunez, a senior, and Kymberli Gomez, a sophomore, relax at the end of Brentwood's Annual Band Show on Sept 16. The Green Machine, which performed an exhibition show at the event, hosted the competition for 12 other bands.



Seniors Frank Grey and Kaylee Frias and junior Jackie Ruiz — all part of the 33-member color guard — share a moment at the high school.

Ruben Nunez, left, gathers other tuba players in lively embrace after the band's exhibition performance at Brentwood's Annual Band Show, an event that kicks off the Green Machine's season.





The Green Machine exits the field after performing in this year's Annual Band Show in Brentwood. Of the 146 members in the marching band, 40 were new this year.

# “We are family,” say band members

Green Machine horn line members have a little fun as they wait to participate in October in Newsday's Marching Band Festival in Uniondale.



Bianca Bacchus, a senior who plays the mellophone (or marching French horn), gets ready for the annual state competition.



At an impromptu pep rally, baritone saxophonist Christian Odom, third from left, tells his bandmates winning or losing doesn't matter — but "leave everything you can on that field."



Kaitlyn Dicks, a sophomore in the color guard, brims with emotion in the final moments before the annual state Field Band Conference Championships in Syracuse.

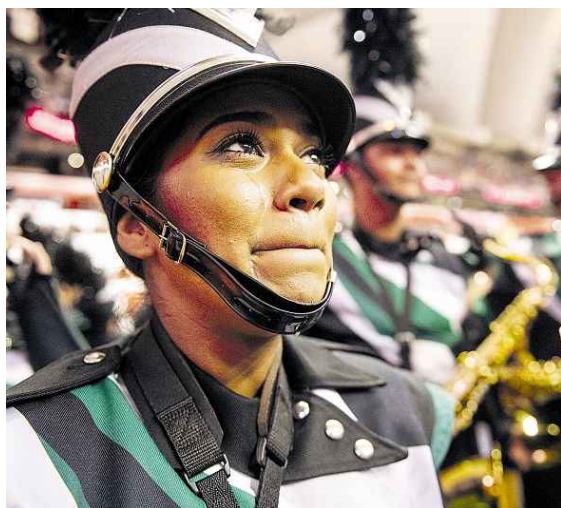
Senior Eros Chicas and junior Kaylie Zelayandia, both flute players, on the five-hour bus ride to the state Field Band Conference in Syracuse. The journey included periods of exuberant song and dance.

# Ready for the big day

"We were tuning and making last-minute preparations for our show," band director Joe Sitler said of this moment. "I don't want them thinking this is their last show — even though for a lot of them, that's the case. I want them ready, focused."



Final practice outside the Carrier Dome in Syracuse. "It's my last one," saxophone section leader and senior Lisa Manbodh said before the show, "and I'm getting all jittery."



Lisa Manbodh waits pensively to hear the band's score (it finished last in a field of eight). Before the show, she was philosophical. "We're not just a halftime show," she said. "We're 150 different stories working for the same goal."



Mellophone player Bianca Bacchus, a senior, is overwhelmed with emotion after the Green Machine's performance in the state Field Band Conference Championships — her last.