

NEWS FROM THE NEST

ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE

GAZETTE

SJC AT 85

The history of our talented school and how far we've come

YOUR GUIDE TO PROM

How to make the most of your last high school dance

April 2026



TRADITIONS AT SJC

Our traditions as eagles from the past to the present

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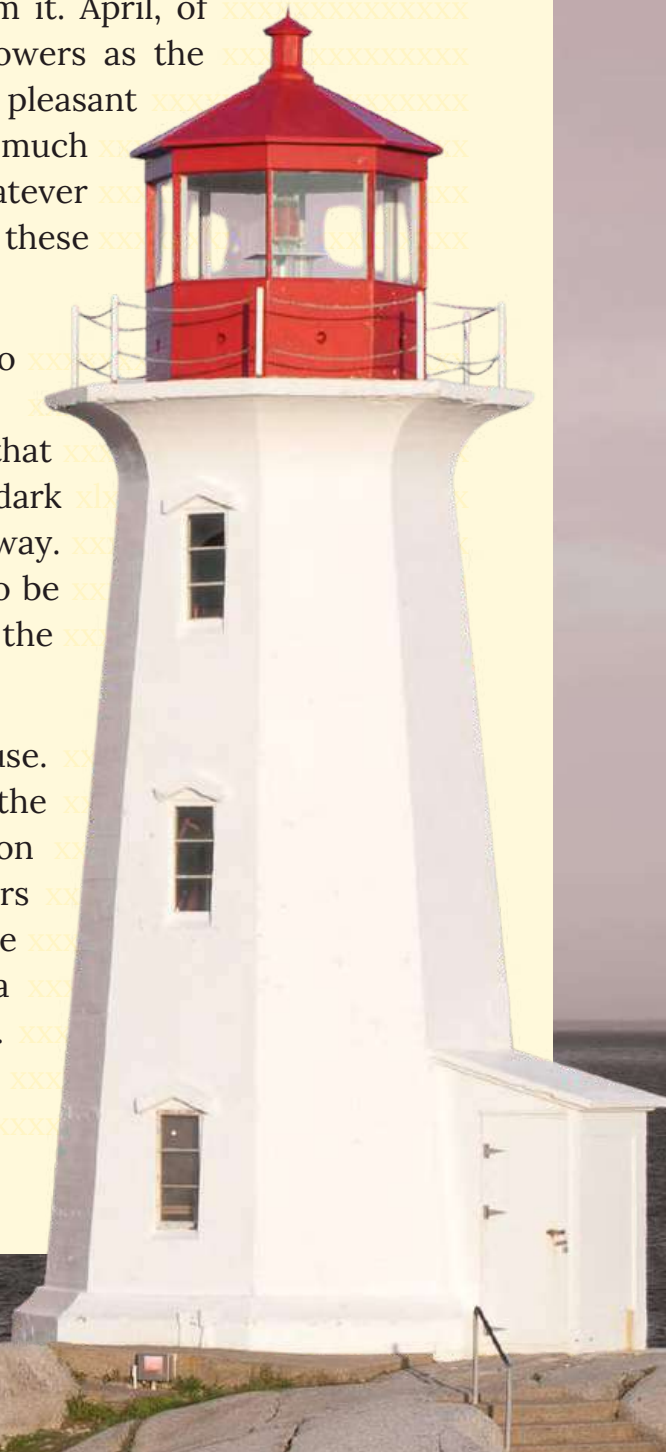
EDITORIAL

By: Mr. Salciccioli

Listening to the pouring rain smacking against the portable roof, I can't help but feel thankful that I have some shelter from it. April, of course, brings no shortage of storms and showers as the environment gets ready for warmer and more pleasant times ahead. The storms don't really bother me much because I make sure that I am prepared for whatever weather April will send my way, and I know that these storms will not last.

Storms will also happen in life. How we react to these storms depends on our preparation. Sometimes in life the storms can be so strong that we need to be reminded that no matter how dark can be, there is a lighthouse to help guide our way. With modern GPS systems, lighthouses seem to be obsolete, but they were built to last and endure the harshest of storms and weather conditions.

St. John's College is very much like a lighthouse. Staff and students have come and gone, but the tradition and values that St. John's is built on continue. It has been here for eighty-five years and helped countless people prepare to navigate the storms that come with life and offered a beacon to those who may have lost their way. So, here is to another eighty-five years of striving to accept, nurture, and challenge the whole person in the spirit of Christ.





Concert Band

PROVINCIALS

By: *Tristan Plaku*

On February 17, 2026, the SJC Concert Band had the amazing opportunity to perform at the Concert Band Provincials at Mohawk College. This event was a fast-paced, exciting, and emotional experience, where students played their hearts out on stage. In this article, we will explore the band's preparation, presentation, and experience at provincials, highlighting the songs that brought the event to life and the recognition they earned for their performance.

The Context: What Are the Concert Band Provincials?

The Concert Band Provincials, otherwise known as the "Golden Horseshoe Music Festival", is an annual festival hosted by the Ontario Band Association. Schools across Ontario are invited to perform, featuring bands of different ages, grade levels, and music experience. At this event, participating groups are given twenty-five minutes to play three songs of their choosing, while music critics judge their performances. After the songs are completed, each band is graded with a level following a set hierarchy: Gold, Silver, Bronze, or Merit, reflecting their overall presentation. Essentially, provincials serve as a large evaluation of bands' skills and musicality.

If a presentation goes extremely well and wins a gold rating, bands may receive an invitation to the Concert Band Nationals, held in Niagara Falls. This festival offers students the opportunity to showcase their talents to a larger audience, achieving recognition that is a highlight for most schools. Even without nationals, performing at provincials is a major honour. It showcases the hard work, dedication, and teamwork of school bands on a highly competitive stage.

Preparation: The Calm Before the Music

In order for a successful performance to occur, a band must begin preparing long before stepping onto the stage. Starting in October, the SJC Concert Band trained consistently for provincials through regular after-school rehearsals. Due to the numerous practices, the band was much more confident with their performance than in previous years, playing their instruments in ways that were nothing short of music to the ears.



Photographer: Wavelength Media



Photographer: Mohawk College

While stress did occur amongst some members, prayers were said before every rehearsal. This gave the band comfort and support through God. All in all, students followed Mrs. Marriott's guidance (SJC's primary music teacher), as she guided the band through each rehearsal. Her main motto was for students to "not put too much pressure on themselves". This ultimately lowered their stress levels and prepared them for the special day forthcoming.



The Main Event: Day of Provincials

February 17, 2026 - the day of provincials. Students and teachers alike boarded buses to be taken to Mohawk College, where they would perform for judges after months of practice. Tension filled the thirty-minute bus ride, as the musicians braced themselves for the upcoming live performance. Upon arrival, they were taken to a warm-up room for last-minute practice. A pep talk was given, putting students in better moods, and then, the SJC Concert Band was called on stage to give it their all...

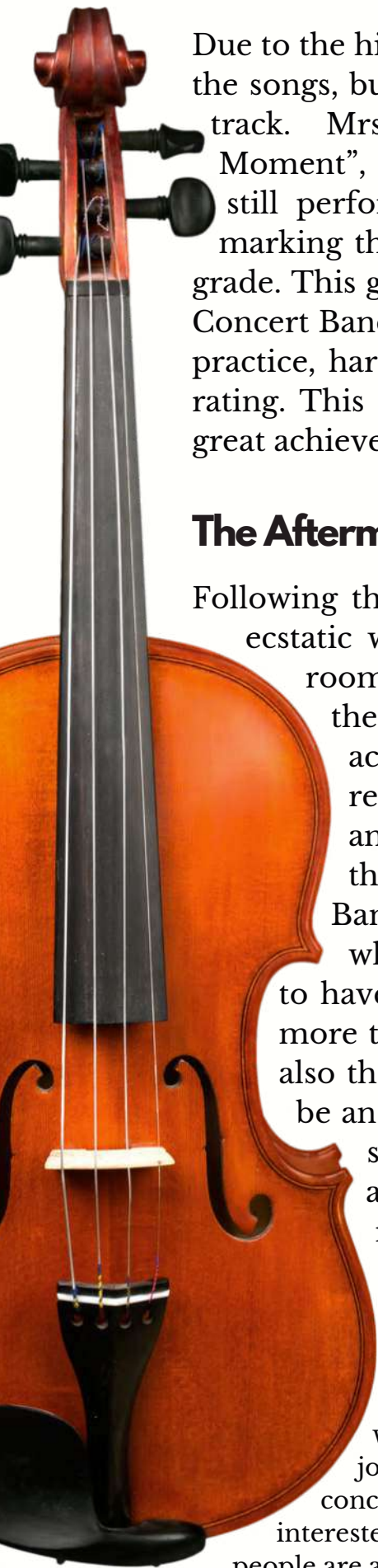
Twenty-five minutes. Twenty-five minutes was all the time the band had to play three songs of their choosing for the judges. Fortunately, the band did not fret, as they had prepared for this day well. They started with a song called “Spring March”, which was a fast-paced piece consisting of many emotions. It was both joyful and

Photographer: Mohawk College

dramatic, with many royalty elements sprinkled into it, taking the audience by surprise with how quickly emotions changed. This was arguably the band’s strongest song and gave them a great start to their performance.

Their next piece was “Shimmer”. It was much slower-paced compared to Spring March, albeit a bit harder to play. Audience members were able to decipher some mistakes due to the song’s slow nature, but the band delivered another strong performance.

After all the songs were completed, the band was sent off-stage to a breakout room as the judges marked their performance.



Due to the high-pressure atmosphere, some mistakes were made during the songs, but the presentation went generally smoothly and stayed on track. Mrs. Marriott described it as a “Canadian Olympic Moment”, where the pressure did get to the students a bit, but they still performed well, nonetheless. Fortunately, the judges finished marking the SJC Concert Band’s performance and awarded it a final grade. This grade was great, in fact, because the judges awarded the SJC Concert Band with a silver rating at the provincials! Through consistent practice, hard work, and perseverance, they were able to earn a silver rating. This rating is an honorary level which many bands consider a great achievement.

The Aftermath: What Next?

Following the silver victory at provincials, the SJC Concert Band was ecstatic with their results, feeling pride and joy. While there was room for improvement, and some students were hard on themselves for not winning gold, the silver win was still a huge accomplishment for the concert band. Mrs. Marriott also reminded students that they should be proud of their results and that winning silver is no easy task in itself (as it is one of the highest levels). With this silver victory, the SJC Concert Band is practicing for the upcoming Concert Band Nationals, which will be held later in the school year. They are excited to have a second opportunity at nationals and will prepare even more to deliver an even stronger performance. The nationals are also the last performance for many Grade 12 members, so it will be an emotional time for all. All in all, provincials were only the stepping stone for SJC’s Concert Band, and nationals will be an even better, stronger, and more powerful performance, representing our school amazingly. Congratulations on the silver victory, Eagles!

If interested, the concert band program runs every year, and everyone is welcome to join as long as you have prior experience with an instrument. If you are only at a beginner level, then consider joining the junior band, which prepares you for the levels that the concert band plays at. The world of music is important at SJC, so if you are interested in joining, then try it out. As Mrs. Marriott always says, “More people are always welcome!”



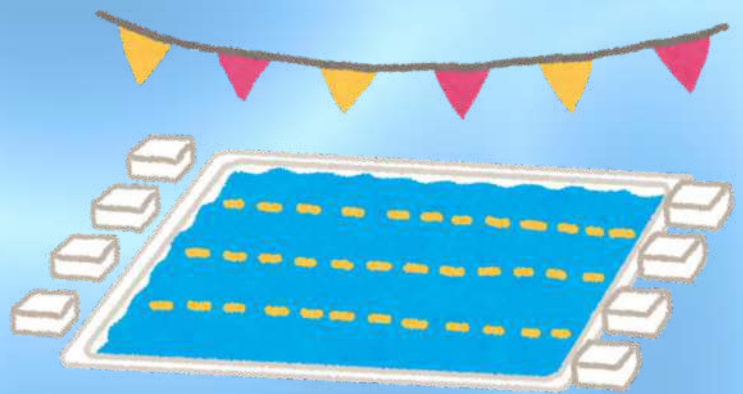
BY: IRIS JEONG

SWIM TEAM AT AABHN

On Thursday, February 5th, the AABHN Swim Meet took place at W. Ross Macdonald School, where St. John swimmers delivered outstanding performances. Demonstrating their hard work, the team secured numerous podium finishes and claimed the overall first-place trophy for the first time in over a decade.



After five months of dedicated training, the swimmers rose to the occasion, showcasing their strength across multiple events and age divisions. The meet highlighted several individual performances, including Henry Perras (15), who placed first in both the 50-yard freestyle and 50-yard backstroke, and Iris Jeong (17), who won the 50-yard freestyle and 100-yard breaststroke. Allison Dobrocky (14) also earned a first-place finish in the 100-yard individual medley, while Max Shea-Slater (14) dominated three events: the 100-yard individual medley, 100-yard freestyle, and 50-yard breaststroke. Emilia Punturiero (16) added two more victories in the 100-yard individual medley and 100-yard butterfly, while Cedric Perras (15) placed first in the 100-yard individual medley and 100-yard backstroke.



Other top finishes included Emma Fries (14), who won both the 50-yard and 100-yard freestyle events, Alyssa Sysiuk (17) in the 100-yard freestyle, Berkeley Stewart (14) in the 100-yard backstroke, and Isabella Zolli (14) in the 100-yard breaststroke.



With the consistent podium finishes and multiple event victories, St. John's reclaimed the championship title. These remarkable efforts not only reflect the team's hard work but also a return to bringing the trophy back home for the first time in more than ten years. Great work, swimmers!

Your Guide To **PROM**

By: *Maheen Wasif*

May 29th, 2026

An Enchanted Kingdom

Night at a Glance

A dreamy recreation of the Lantern Festival, featuring floating lights after the iconic boat scene. Expect a sea of lavender, gold accents, and perhaps a few Flynn Rider-inspired vests. Whether it's the food, the dancing, or the once-in-a-lifetime photos, the Class of 2026 is ready to find their "new dream."

"We wanted to represent our final time together as we figure out who we are." – Destiny Foa



A Royal Transition

For the Class of 2026, Prom isn't just a dance; it's a portal. As students prepare to "trade their textbooks for tiaras" on May 29th, the 'Enchanted Kingdom' theme serves as a bridge between high school memories and future destinies.

"I think Prom is the start of a new journey as we leave behind an old one. Just like our theme, we are stepping into our roles as we find our place in society." – Destiny Foa, Prom Committee Member

This isn't a last-minute concept, either. Foa reveals that the vision for a Tangled-inspired evening has been in the works for three years, culminating in a massive 20-page proposal to ensure the purple and gold color scheme perfectly captures a sense of "new hope and light."

Living the Fairytale

The atmosphere promises to be more than just a regular school dance. The Prom Committee has teased a whimsical evening filled with lush floral decor, golden sun motifs, and glowing lanterns. There is even a whispered rumor of a six-foot-tall Rapunzel's tower making an appearance at the venue.

"I liked the theme because it's Tangled and I like anything Disney-themed" – Mulan How

While some students are meticulously matching their lavender gowns and floral crowns to the Kingdom of Corona, for others, the night is simply about the people. When asked what would make the night complete, How's answer was simple: "Definitely my best friends."



A Royal Welcome

Step through a canopy of cascading wisteria and glowing lanterns as you enter the Kingdom of

Corona. Our floral-lined walkway sets the stage for an unforgettable night of magic. Be sure to arrive early to experience the grand transformation of St. John's entrance!"

At Last I See the Light

Capture the 'Best Day Ever' at our signature photo booth! Featuring the iconic sun of Corona and a shimmering backdrop of fairy lights, it's the ultimate spot for you and your friends to document your night. Don't forget to tag [#St_Johns Prom 2026](#).



Advice for the Big Night

As we prepare to hit the dance floor, here are three things to keep in mind:

1. Comfort is Key: You can't dance the night away if your shoes are killing you. Bring a pair of 'emergency' sneakers for the late-night hours.
2. Unplug (occasionally): Take the photos, record the stories, but don't forget to put the phone down and actually live the moment.
3. It's Your Night: Whether you go with a date, a group of friends, or solo, the goal is to celebrate you.

So, to the Class of 2026: let's make this a night to remember. The lights are dimmed, the music is starting, and the floor is yours. See you at Prom!

← Outfit Inspiration

THE ANNIVERSARY OF SJC TURNING 85 YEARS OLD

PHOTOS FROM OLD SJC YEARBOOKS PROVIDED BY PAT LENZ

Our amazing, historic, and talented school is turning 85 years old this year. Since 1941, the SJC Eagles were founded, creating a strong and loving community. When SJC was first created, classes took place in the basement of St. Ann's Elementary School in Brantford, starting with just one Grade 9 class. Then, in 1951, the school moved to Dufferin Avenue, where other grades were added.

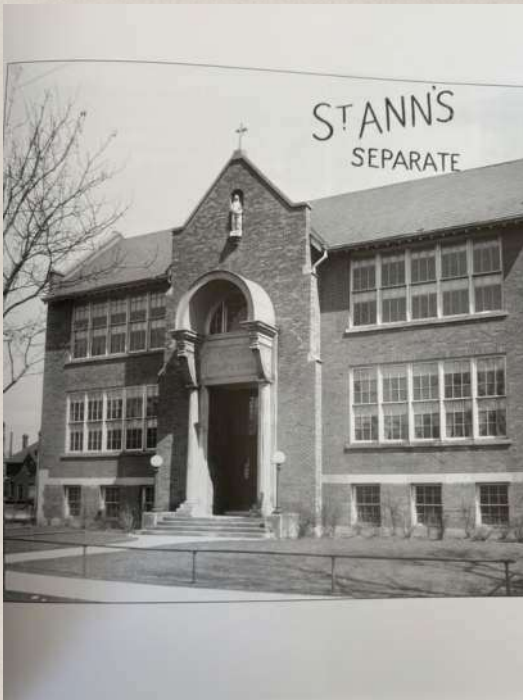


Brantford Catholic School on Dufferin Ave 1953

The school started with just 20 students in 1941 and later enrolled 1,700 by September 1991. From 1951 to 1978, priests of the Congregation of the Resurrection served as principals. In 1955, the school expanded, adding a gym, four classrooms, and a modern front hallway. Four years later, the school was officially renamed St. John's College, leaving behind the name of Brantford Catholic High School.

In 1970-1971, the school moved to Paris Road. Renovations continued in 1981 and 1989, including a new cafeteria, triple gymnasium, 13 classrooms, library, facility and lounge area, new main entrance, guidance and health center, administration offices, and nine additional classrooms. In 1991, 20 portables were added, and a year later, the Catholic Education in Brant County celebrated its fiftieth anniversary.

That same year, Assumption College opened on Shellard Lane to provide more space for Catholic students seeking education. Later, Holy Trinity Secondary School opened in Simcoe in 2001. Since then, our Eagles have grown exponentially, and the little things like dress-down days and our involvement in sports have evolved throughout history.



St. Ann's School

Clothing

In 1941, the style of clothing was vastly different from today, and dress-down day options were very dissimilar, ranging from boys and girls. Boys typically wore buttoned-up shirts with slacks or trousers, while girls would style blouses, dresses, and skirts. The day was filled with students wearing “dressy casual” clothing, which was far more formal than modern-day outfits. The clothing was one step down from the uniform but much fancier than what students choose today, like sweatpants, tight leggings, quarter-zip sweaters, or tight long-sleeved shirts for girls, and jeans or sweatpants with a t-shirt or sweater for boys.

Today, we see dress-down days as a chance to wear what we want and to style our clothes. However, in the 1940s, students had much stricter rules, and the idea of casual wear was very different. In 1941, outfits for school dances and special events like prom or graduation were substantially unlike our modern-day clothing. For graduation, girls wore tea-length or floor-length white dresses that looked like wedding attire, while boys wore formal suits with long pants. At dances, women wore knee-length dresses with discreet necklines, while men would style sports coats with ties or suits.

Since 1941 was during WWII, it influenced the style of many students, becoming more casual due to fabric rationing. Students leaned away from “adult-styled” clothes like suits or formal wear, shifting toward a teenage style.



SJC Uniforms 1983

In 2026, students wear shorter or lower dresses, designed to be more flowery or bejeweled. Students also have many more options for their fashion, including casual shoes and different hairstyles. In 1941, girls styled their hair in soft curls, complex pin curls, or voluminous Victory rolls, which were tubular rolls on the top or side of their hair. Boys would style their hair into a side part, have short sides, and brush it back or slick it. Today, girls wear their hair curled loosely or straightened with layers or bangs, while boys keep their hair short or long at the front, sometimes with gel.

Sports

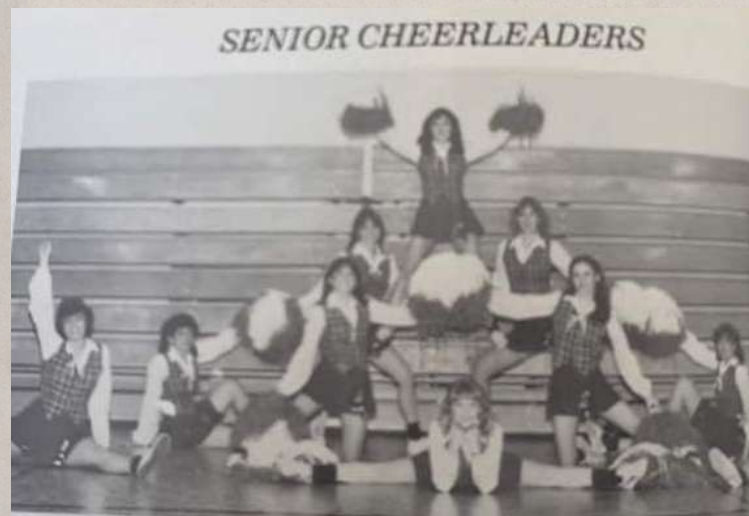
In 1941, students played sports such as soccer, volleyball, basketball, football, rugby, hockey, and track and field. However, the school offered fewer sports and was limited, mostly because of the World War II period. Hockey was also much rougher in the 1940s due to irregular rink sizes and rules.

The school has a strong reputation for participating in CWOSSA, ABBHN, and OFSAA championships.

In 2018, the Eagles had a wonderful year in rugby, winning a silver medal in the OFSAA championship, along with bronze medals in 2007, 2009, and 2016. In 1992-93 and 1996-97, SJC even had a cheerleading team, led by school spirit and captains. The Eagles also featured unique sports such as fly-fishing and ultimate frisbee. Now, SJC provides senior and junior sports including badminton, volleyball, basketball, flag football, tennis, curling, and much more!



SJC Football 1983



SJC Cheerleading 1982

Academics

In 1941, even the way students communicated and completed their work was extremely different. They relied on fountain pens, notebooks, and textbooks, compared to the digital Brightspace resources we utilize today. Academics mainly offered major subjects like English, math, and religion, while modern electives such as healthcare, construction, hairstyling, or cooking did not exist.

From 1941 to 1960, students were required to complete Grade 13 to attend university or college. Between 1960 and 1983, students needed 27 credits to earn the OSSD (Ontario Secondary School Diploma), which meant taking seven to eight classes per year. From 1984 to 1990, the requirement increased to 30 credits, with eight classes in Grades 9 and 10, and seven classes in Grades 11 and 12.



SJC Grad 1982

A Look Back

Overall, this wholesome school has not only been full of hard work and students, but also of amazing contributions that it has brought to Brantford. As we celebrate 85 years, we cherish the remarkable things students have done, such as visiting nursing homes, contributing to organizations and charities, participating in food drives like Spring Into Giving and other campaigns, and growing religion and Christian leadership.



SJC Aerial View 2000

Even the Relay for Life program, a meaningful night filled with walking and games that raise money for cancer research while cherishing loved ones has been at hand. This event has been held since 2007, marking 18 years of hardworking staff, and students raising thousands of dollars for remarkable causes.



Current photo of SJC

In conclusion, we thank our staff, students, and history for creating this outstanding school with the blissful memories it holds. It is magnificent to see how far our school has come, from a basement in an elementary school with just one class to an amazing community with five grades, along with many options, electives, clubs, and sports that students are thrilled to have. Even though the building and history have aged, the dreams and memories will always stay young. 85 amazing years have passed, and 85 more are to come!

ARTS & CULTURE SHSM

By: *Priyana Rostron*

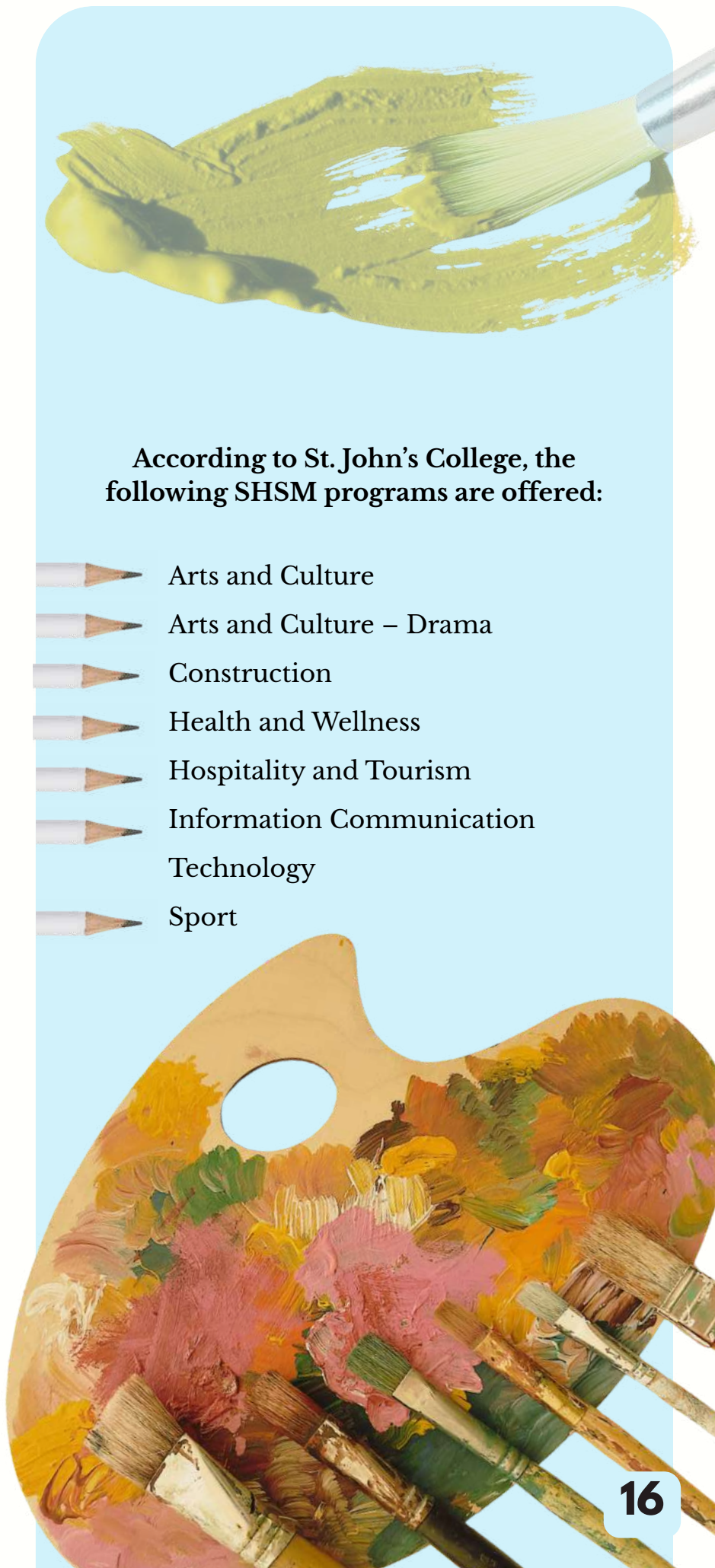
At St. John's College, we offer a broad assortment of classes, extracurriculars, and programs for students looking to pursue their passions and goals. One of these many programs is the Arts and Culture SHSM program!

Firstly, what is SHSM (Specialist High Skills Major)?

The Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM, for short) is a program that helps students pursue the education and experience required for their specific pathway. This program provides students with essential skills and professional background while aligning with the Ontario Secondary School Diploma requirements. Because of this, students can make informed choices when exploring post-secondary education.

According to St. John's College, the following SHSM programs are offered:

- 
- Arts and Culture
 - Arts and Culture – Drama
 - Construction
 - Health and Wellness
 - Hospitality and Tourism
 - Information Communication Technology
 - Sport



Personally, I would recommend the Arts and Culture SHSM to anyone who wants to pursue Visual Arts and/or is looking for a Specialist High Skills Major because of the unique opportunities it offers to students!

Firstly, Arts and Culture allows students to work with diverse and experimental mediums. During certain workshops, students learn techniques such as stone carving, painting, sewing, and digital mediums like photo editing and video-making. Because of this, the learning experience becomes more flexible and broader in what students are able to create.

Next, students get the opportunity to go on school trips to various places. In this program, students have the chance to visit art galleries, universities, colleges, and even significant art landmarks. By seeing these areas and learning from them, students can gain a greater view of the art world.

Finally, Arts and Culture teaches important financial and experiential skills to students. The SHSM program includes lessons such as curating a portfolio, managing and planning events, customer service, and physical safety. From this, students can develop skills for their lives and careers and stand out from other competitors.

Overall, I highly recommend the Arts and Culture SHSM program to anyone willing to try it. There is much in store for people in Arts and Culture!



Learning soap stone carving with soap stone artist Eric Martin.



Touring Ontario College of Art and Design.

Traditions at

By: Maheen Wasif



The Green and White Thread

Every morning at St. John's College, the flicker of a TV screen or the roar of a pep rally reminds us that we are part of something much larger than a four year stay. Behind every tradition lies a history of students and staff who built the "Eagle Spirit" from the ground up. To understand how our traditions evolved, we sat down with three long-standing members of the SJC family: Mr. Dobrolowski, who has shaped the arts and tech department for over two decades; Mr. Ryan MacKinlay, a staple of the teaching staff for 25 years; and Mrs. Christine Luciani, a teacher for over 25 years and a former student (Class of '88.)



From Classroom Project to Digital Culture

While we now take our morning announcements for granted, Mr. Dobrolowski recalls a time when SJC-TV was a brand-new experiment. Formed in the 2005-2006 school year under Principal Dina Dalia, the station was born out of the newly established Technology Department.

Initially, it was operated by students enrolled in the Broadcast Journalism course – Mr. Dobrolowski

It wasn't just about reading the news; it was about industry standards. Students in grades 11 and 12 acted as program hosts, lighting technicians, and video editors.





An early SJC TV broadcast setup ↷



What started as simple announcements soon expanded into a creative hub for photographers, animators, and illustrators to showcase student life, sports, and holiday themes.

Evolution of “Hype”

If you’ve ever felt the gym floor shake during a modern pep rally, you might wonder if it was always this intense. Mr. Ryan MacKinlay, who has seen a quarter-century of pep rallies, notes that while the “hype” level fluctuates with each Student Council, the goal has remained the same:

“It was always a time for the entire school to get together to celebrate and build community spirit.”

However, Mrs. Luciani remembers a different kind of energy from her days as a student in the mid-80s. In an era before digital sound systems, the “technology” was the students themselves.

“We didn’t have technology like today. Pep rallies consisted of Student Council members teaching the student body songs where clapping was involved. We’d shout ‘We are... St. John’s!’ and bang our feet or clap our hands. Another was the Eagle Song where a council member would lead us with ‘We are the team in green’ and the whole school would repeat each line.”

Because SJC was the only Catholic high school in the area at the time, drawing students from as far as Waterford, Paris, and St. George, the gym was always packed to the rafters.



An early SJC TV animation – scan the QR code to watch!



Oranges, Grapefruits, and “Legendary Teachers”

Some traditions have faded into history, like the famous Citrus Fruit Campaign. Long before modern fundraisers, SJC students sold boxes of Florida oranges and grapefruits.

“In December, a truck would drive straight from the orange groves in Florida all the way up to St. John’s” – Mrs. Luciani.

Phys-ed students would spend the day unloading the truck and organizing orders.

“The gymnasium would smell amazing because of this fresh citrus. It was the freshest citrus fruit that you could get, better than the grocery store in those days. We made some good money to raise for our school events, sports, and so on. And I would say the community probably looked forward to the St. John’s Citrus Fruit Campaign, too.”

The school’s reputation for excellence extended into its athletic and arts programs as well. Mrs. Luciani highlighted the legendary Saturday morning basketball program that turned SJC into a powerhouse.

“Kids would grow up coming here to St. John’s for Saturday morning basketball. By the time they came here as students, they were already so skilled... Our girls’ team would often defeat teams from as far as Sudbury. [And] the great abilities of all our athletes continues to this day.”

Even the hallways themselves hold stories of extreme dedication. Mrs. Luciani shared the “legend” of Albert Pullman, a former art teacher whose passion for the school was so great that he was said to keep a couch in the back of his classroom (now Ms. Kowalski’s room.)



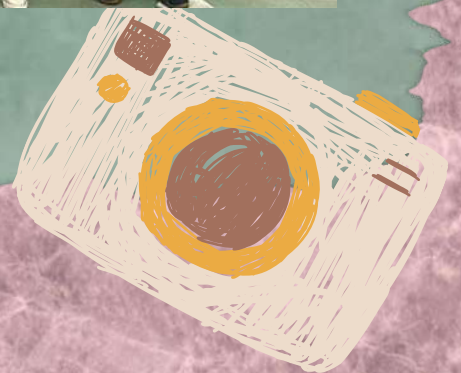
“Legend has it that he would often be so late working into the night on his lessons and checking things and perhaps doing his own artwork, that sometimes he would just sleep there overnight, and I believe that legend is true.”

A Legacy Continues

Whether it is a teacher staying overnight to perfect a lesson or a student council leader teaching a new generation of Eagles a chant, the "community effort" Mrs. Luciani describes remains the heartbeat of St. John’s College. As we look forward to the next semi-formal or pep rally, we walk the same halls as the students who came before us, carrying on a legacy that—much like the smell of fresh Florida citrus—is uniquely SJC.



Color Night 2025, Photographer: Mr. MacKinlay



I AM NOT USELESS TREASURE



BY: OAIKHINAN OGHOSA



SHORT STORY

Some humans think being trapped in a large cave surrounded by mountains of gold, diamonds, rubies, and other gemstones that they would lie and cheat themselves over is the pinnacle of their materialistic greedy lives. This is not true. Though I wouldn't know - I am not even human.

I have been in this cave for a long time. I cannot even tell how much time has passed since I am in this blasted, dark cave! There is no sun and I am weighed down by thousands of gemstones. I can't believe humans find these riches valuable and worth fighting over. In the end, they will simply be thrown away, just like the previous king who threw me in here with this rubbish treasure to keep me away from the reach of humans.

This king was always afraid his subjects would try to steal his riches away. However, no one would dare since he was a malicious ruler. He always overtaxed his subjects, executed officials based on conjecture, and was simply incapable of keeping his word. The worst thing was that he caused multitudes of deaths when the Agrona demons attacked humans and absorbed their Anam, stealing the poor souls and turning them into lifeless husks. Somehow, this ruler found a way to execute everyone that had good control over their Lugh. He took this a step further when he also destroyed all items that would allow someone to master this skill. This was all done as he believed that those humans would soon become overpowered and take his throne, along with his treasures. This selfish thinking blinded him from what their true purpose was. They were called to be forces of rectitude and destroy the demons.

It was a horrendous period. The king was only concerned for what would happen to his lifeless treasure trove as there were no more people coming to help him count how much he had. And with that *cursed* emblem of his...

My thoughts were interrupted by a deafening groan. It seemed that a large boulder of sorts was being moved. I could sense the Lugh of whoever was moving the stone. From the sounds of it, the person seemed pretty capable.

"The treasures are actually real!?" A voice echoed through the once silent cave.

"I almost thought all those huge history books in the library would be lying," another voice remarked in response.

Who are these people? I wondered. Are these some treasure hunters looking to loot some ancient treasure trove they read about? Could it be that they are looking for me?

Well, good luck to them. This pair will need to dig through all this *junk* to find me. I wonder, *why do they need me now?* The queen of the Agrona demons was defeated years ago. I am only needed to go against Béist. Unless...

Could it be that another being decided to mess with the dark arts? What is with sapient beings and their quests for power!

This small group use their time by walking and tripping over these so-called 'treasures' trying to find me.

"Maybe I should..." A voice, a male, spoke once more.

"No, Luan, we are not having that happen again," the other personage, a female, responds disapprovingly.

A long silence followed.

Her voice softened, "You know what happened when you tried finding a *Naofa* object."

This partnership had a stroke of luck; they searched through the mountains of rubies until they miraculously stumbled upon the tip of my blade and pulled me out. They had a lot of small floating spheres of light. I wondered, how could they have been struggling to find me when they had all this light?

Now free from the piles of treasures, I could finally see the partners that had pulled me out. Maybe see is not the right word, since I don't even have eyes.

The first person was a lady with braided, auburn coloured hair, and beautiful green eyes that complimented her freckled face. She was the one holding me now. She seemed to be the one who was using Lugh, I could sense it more strongly now. She was taller than her companion. Her companion had short blonde hair and seemed reasonably tall himself. Although, there was something unusual about him.

The lady seemed to hold her breath as she stared at me with her green eyes shining, "We can finally go the Otherworld and plead our case!" She exclaimed excitedly.

"Can I hold it?" The man asked so softly, gesturing towards me. I thought she wouldn't have been able to hear him.

I felt her grip me even tighter and her fingers began to tremble.

"Just to make sure it's the right one," he said softly.

She reluctantly let him take me into his hands. He steadily ran his thumb across the edge of my blade tracing the ogham notches that climbed from the hilt to the tip of the blade. I could sense his Lughas well, but once again, it seemed wrong. It felt as if it had been tainted by evil and sinister beings that were lurking underneath waiting for the right time to be let out. It made me feel uneasy. I somehow knew that I should be at the top of my guard when near this unknown but present threat. I did not trust him.

"Here," he put me back in her hands, "it's real."

"Well, then we need to find the '*Daur Doire*'..." the lady continued.

"You still haven't told me what you're planning to do when we get there. We can't just walk in you know," the man stated quite simply.

"I know," she put me in the scabbard at her hip that seemed perfectly made for a sword like me, "But even if we are turned back, which I don't believe will happen, *this sword* gives us a better chance."

Millions of questions spiral through my thoughts. What could have driven them this far to find me? Could the Agrona demons be back? I shake my non-existent head, that would be impossible. Their queen was defeated and sealed by me years ago. Anything and everything I seal stays sealed forever. The group returns to the journey exiting the cave and now making their way through a forest with towering trees. The sun filtered through the lattice of leaves, giving the path we walked on an eerie shadowed feel. However, it felt good to be outside again after being trapped underground for the longest time.

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In the distance, I heard a twig snap and some scuttling. We stopped moving and the same feeling I felt in Luan was now not only present, but also even stronger.

Something fell from one of the trees. Though calling it a something would be exceedingly generous. The thing seemed to breathe and quiver while Niamh and Luan stood still, frozen in place. It stood up breathing hoarsely. If I were to describe it, I would say that it had greyish blue skin, ugly yellow teeth that seemed too big for its own mouth, ears like of those of a wild cat, and eyes that were of a brassy gold. The creature was also very small. It looked like something that died and that should have stayed dead. It stared straight at us and gave a wide menacing grin. I had seen a lot of evil creatures in my lifetime, but I didn't recognize this particular one.

"Sword." It said hoarsely.

Luan took a step backward and grabbed Niamh's arm, "We need to leave-

"You can't leave," the being interrupted threateningly.

All of a sudden, darkness engulfed us and all that could be seen were beady, brassy eyes all around. The creatures began to make horrible sounds. It was troublesome. In the blink of an eye, all these creatures came together. They formed a massive being with multiple eyes and dozens of limbs. I thought they were ugly before but now they were unbearably hideous.

The new creature came straight towards them. Luan pushed Niamh out of the way which allowed the creature to use one of its hands to hit Luan straight in the jaw. This move sent him reeling until he came in hard contact with a tree. Niamh immediately regained her composure and used her Lugh to create a sword. I found that rather offensive, considering I was right there - but to each their own.

Niamh seemed to be a seasoned warrior. She was doing her best to defend herself from the creature's never-ending blows while performing her own moves. This is not an easy thing as the creature had many hands and no matter how many she cut down it just seemed to have more. Suddenly, it grabbed the scabbard where I was located and tore it away from the belt pushing Niamh to the ground.

Unexpectedly, a torrential surge of pure force ripped through the forest. All the trees that were around Luan were in ashes. The creature groaned in pain.

Luan was standing still; blood was on his face. He was surrounded by an aura of dark purple with yellow that waved like ribbons in the wind. I now knew what I sensed before when he held me. He was an Agrona. But he still had Lugh, which should be impossible...

It hit the floor in an instant as a massive hole tore through the creature's body. It wailed and tried to regenerate itself. But Luan was quick, striking again at the creature's legs and arms. It then came crashing down. Niamh finally managed to get up and used her sword to cut off the creature's head. It let out an ugly cry and melted, leaving behind a small round brassy object.

Niamh, breathing hard, immediately picked me up and held me tightly while Luan picked up the object. He came around to show it to Niamh. It was as big as a human hand and had a red wolf wearing a chained crown with it standing above a sword.

Isn't this Queen Bridget's family emblem?" Niamh asked.

Luan slowly nodded.

I would always recognise that king's emblem. This meant this creature was purposefully created using an old magic once used by former rulers especially this king's lineage. What can I say? That's monarchy for you.

TO BE CONTINUED...

SJC

Uniform Through the Decades

By: Sophia Cicci

All photos of students taken from old SJC yearbooks

St. John's College has seen many uniform changes that reflect the school's long and evolving history. Did you know that St. John's College began in 1941 in the basement of St. Ann's Elementary School? As enrollment gradually increased, the school moved in 1951 to a new location on Dufferin Avenue. With continued growth in student numbers, a Board of Governors for Brantford Catholic High School was established, and in 1959, the school was officially named St. John's College.

In 1961, Providence College was founded as an all-girls Catholic high school in a new building on the current Paris Road campus. Providence students could continue their education at the St. John's College Dufferin campus if they wished to pursue Grade 13 before entering university. By the 1970–1971 school year, Providence College and St. John's College merged to form a single institution, gradually introducing co-education. The Paris Road campus was then renamed St. John's College.



Throughout its history, the school uniform has evolved alongside the institution itself. In the 1960s, uniforms at St. John's College served much the same purpose as they do today: fostering pride in the school and in what students wear, while promoting an environment of self-respect, formality, dignity, and mutual respect. The uniform has always been intended to support a focused learning environment, helping students concentrate on their studies rather than on differences in appearance.

1950's Style: The Original SJC Look

The early St. John's College uniform carried a distinctive style that reflected the era. In connecting with a past graduate, Mr. Martin Carbone, who attended SJC from 1955 to 1960, we get a glimpse into what students wore during those years. Mr. Carbone recalls that during his time, the students moved from civilian clothes into school uniforms around 1958-1959. When the uniform was introduced, it featured mandatory blazers and crisp white collared shirts. Boys wore grey trousers, while girls wore plaid skirts.



One interesting detail stands out: the blazers were blue, even though the official school colours were green and white. It's a small piece of history that makes the early uniform uniquely memorable.

In addition to these distinctive features, another fascinating piece of local history is where students purchased their uniforms. At the time, SJC uniforms could be bought right in downtown Brantford at Quinlan's Men's Store on Colborne Street, connecting the school's traditions with the local community.



1960s Style: Tradition in a Changing Time

The 1960s were a time of change and more liberal fashion trends. However, the St. John's College uniform was still a relatively new tradition and continued to maintain a formal and structured appearance.



During this decade, the school maintained clear expectations about how the uniform should be worn, with the goal of supporting a respectful and disciplined learning environment. Female students wore a plaid A-line skirt with a modest hemline below the knee. Male students wore grey trousers along with a collared shirt and tie. Female students, however, did not require a tie. Black shoes were expected for male students, while female students wore white socks and shoes.



At the same time, the culture of the 1960s began to influence young people, including students at SJC. While the uniform itself remained largely unchanged, students sometimes expressed their personal style in small ways. One common way was through hairstyles. Popular styles of the time, such as the bouffant and the flip, began to appear among students while still respecting the school's expectations for the uniform.



1970s: Far Out and Fun

Unlike the 60s, the 70s were all about increasing comfort and individuality, which influenced SJC Uniforms. The Uniform policy began to relax and allowed more casual and comfortable options on non-formal days. A white collared shirt could now be worn on a day-to-day basis without a blazer. Furthermore, self-expression was permitted, as students were allowed to slightly accessorise their uniforms also.



Most notably, the kilt was introduced in this decade, replacing the skirts. The kilt was worn with strict rules about the length, being just above the knee, and always paired with knee-high tube socks and black formal dress shoes.

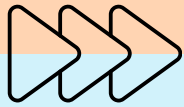


1980s: Funky and Fabulous

The uniforms of this decade began as a continuation of the 70s style, although the trends very much changed. Big, teased hair was still in with perms, backcombed hair, and mullets being seen around every corner of the school.

Other than the hair, this decade of uniform fashion introduced two uniform changes: sweater vests and unisex uniforms. Sweater vests were introduced with the same green colour we wear today.

Along with this, the uniforms became more unisex as the girls were allowed to start wearing slacks in the 80's decade. And in terms of shoes, penny loafers were usually the go-to for the guys. The 80s are famous for their big, bold fashion, and this managed to also find its way into the SJC uniform, where girls started to put shoulder pads in their blazers to achieve that famous 80s bold shoulder look, capturing the fashion essence of the decade.



1990s: Casual and Cool



This decade has the most drastic uniform changes by far compared to the other decades discussed. During the 1990s, sweaters were introduced featuring a crest with our mascot, the eagle. These sweaters were either paired with white collared shirts or white turtlenecks. Golf shirts were also introduced, though they were only available in white and were quite popular. Another popular clothing item from this decade was the polar fleece zip-up vest, available in black.

Next, the rugby shirt! - which had a bold horizontal white stripe with a gray stripe between, and a white SJC crest and collar, unlike the modern rugby shirts we wear today. "A popular trend at the time was to pop your collar," says Mr. Lynch from SJC Student Services.

Shoes even had their moment of change. Shoes had to be black or brown, formal, closed-toed, and made of polishable leather. I thought this would be extremely uncomfortable. When interviewing Mr. Lynch, who attended Saint John's in the 90s, he stated, "It was uncomfortable, but you learned to get used to it."

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2000s: The Modern Era

Entering the 21st century also meant a new, modern look for our SJC logo. The most subtle change was the logos on the golf shirts being updated to the logo we use now. Black golf shirts were introduced with a white lining on the edge of the collar, quite unlike our current golf shirts.



The jacket was also introduced in black, with a white zipper, along with a short-sleeved rugby shirt, looking like the long-sleeved rugby shirts we wear today. Jumpers were also introduced, being grey and worn over a white collared shirt daily, although they were not the most popular uniform option. Lastly, the most memorable item introduced during the decade was capris. They were exactly the same as the grey pants we wear today, except they were shorter, with the cutoff being halfway up your calf. The same 90s rules for the shoes continued.

Very low-ankle socks with shoes or no socks with sandals were the standard. As for the hair, the side part swept the nation, being worn by the majority of the students in the school and became the standard; these were often accompanied by side bangs for both genders. Highlights became a trend with pops of blond streaks being especially popular.



2010s: On Fleek!

Phasing in and phasing out of uniform styles & clothing items! One new item was introduced, which we have today, the long sleeve golf shirt, which only came in the colour black. Other than this, there were only slight uniform changes. Firstly, the polar zip-up vests were phased out. The lining on the edge of the collars of the golf shirts was gone, and the design and colours of the rugby shirt changed to the one we wear today. Hemlines on the kilts were shorter and the logos on all the uniforms changed to the modern version, which we use today.

During this decade, the trends weren't quite set in stone, but side parts and messy buns were quite popular. As for the shoes, the rules became looser, and all black non-formal shoes were now allowed to be worn year-round. This decade was much more about your own personal style/preference and how you would express yourself as an individual. In turn, there weren't many exact trends to follow during this decade.



2020s: Where We Are Now

In the 2020s, very few changes have occurred to the uniform, the only changes being more colour variations of golf shirts and phasing out the capris. As for trends, Nike socks and Birkenstocks are all the rage, and this trend seems set in stone during any season of the year. Middle parts, slick backs, mullets, and blowout tapers are the norm. The hemlines on the skirts are much shorter. Although there are always outliers, I believe that this decade is much more about wearing what you want compared to the other decades, with much more outside influence competing with the standard school uniform requirements.

This is especially because social media has become a large part of our lives, and trends move far too fast to make an impact. This causes us to just pick and choose what we like and what we want to wear, which, in a way, gives us a bit more freedom of expression, but also can stretch the boundaries of our uniform requirements. We welcome spirit wear on some days and are required to wear the Number 1 dress on special occasions. Upon interviewing grade 11 student 'BC', he shared a desire for the return of the blazer to help formalize the uniform, while a grade 12 student, "Jesse" hopes for less formalization. Much is this generation about self-expression that it is not a surprise that we have varying opinions on uniform standards.



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THANKS TO THE
EAGLES WHO
MADE THIS
RELEASE A
REALITY**

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