THE TROJAN TIMES

TROJANS
Trimester 1 2026

Issue 1 Ms. Jacobs' Journalism Class

New Lunch Menu Gets Mixed Reviews

by Jasmine G, & Allison N

The Sheppard cafeteria lunch menu has changed a bit from last year. Some students are open to trying the new meals, while others would rather have the old menu back. More students said they preferred last year's lunch menu. Jasmine G. said she preferred last year's lunch "because, honestly, it was better." The reason for the change was that the school worked with a company whose special chef created new recipes to give students more options.

We came to the cafeteria for this information but Ms. Stephanie also stated that, "It's nice to get your feedback too, we just kinda assume you guys like it." Student feedback can be helpful because it lets the cafeteria staff know what students enjoy and what could be improved. Several foods have changed this year. The Alfredo pasta noodles were replaced with colorful knots, and the bread was changed as well. A chicken chipotle rice bowl was added, along with a vegetarian bowl and dumplings. There are two to three kinds of dumplings available. However, mac and cheese was removed from the menu.

Juan C. shared his opinion, saying, "The new lunch menu is good once in a while."

Some of the students' favorite foods include chicken alfredo and the chicken sandwiches, and students can also choose between regular and spicy versions. Over time, the school has continued making changes to the lunch menu. The cafeteria has started offering more fruits and vegetables, different main dishes, and more choices for students. Overall, the new lunch menu has sparked mixed reactions among students.

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Students line up for food during lunch

UPCOMING EVENTS

MESA Meetings Every Wednesday 3:15-4:15
Oct 29 - Screamfest
Nov 5 - First Basketball Game
Nov 9 – Second Trimester begins
Nov 9-10 - Minimum Days
Nov 11 - Veteran's day
Nov 23-27 - Thanksgiving Break
Nov 30 - Boys Basketball Tryout
Dec 1 - Home Game
Dec 10 - Winter Concert at 6:00pm
Dec 16 - Movie Night at 4:30pm
Dec 18 - Reindeer Run
Dec 21 - Holiday Break
Jan 12-13 - Minimum Days
Jan 18 - President's Day

Turkey Trot Changes to Reindeer Run

by Leandrei D., and Ian S.

Sheppard Middle School's annual fall tradition, the Turkey Trot, will not take place this year. According to Ms Jacobs, the event will not be held because of the upcoming ScreamFest on October 29th. The Turkey Trot has been a thing at Sheppard since 2001, making it approximately 25 years old.

P.E. teacher Jessica Hernandez said, "We do this tradition for the fun of it!"

The Turkey trot is open to all 6th 7th and 8th-grade students. To make the competition fair, separate races are held for boys and girls in each grade level. Students have the opportunity to place top three and win prizes, including pumpkin pies, shirts, and more. The Turkey Trots course is 1.5 miles long. It starts at the dirt track, goes around the outer part of the school, and ends near the G building.

Seventh grader Reina J. said, "I participated because i was really hoping to finish 1st but ended up only placing 2nd. Even though it was a tiring 1.5 miles, I actually had a fun time doing the Turkey Trot, winning at least a ribbon and a pie."

Last year, three of the fastest times were Axel G. with the time of 8:54 in the eighth-grade boys' race, Ivan A with a time of 9:04 in the seventh-grade boys' race and Xzavier B. with a time of 9:37 in the sixth-grade boys 'race.

Students will have another opportunity to participate in a similar event called the Reindeer Run.The Reindeer Run is confirmed for December 18 which will take the turkey trot's place this year but will still be the same course as the turkey trot.

SCHOOL NEWS

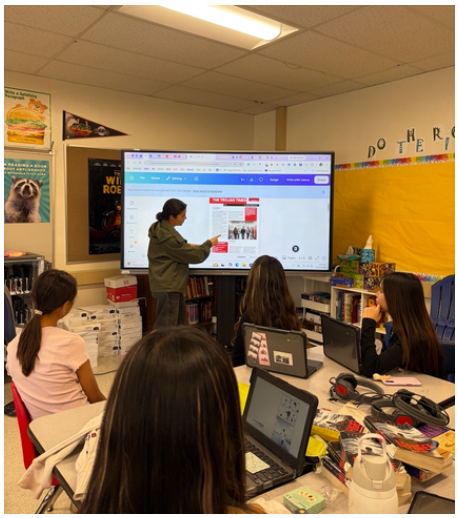
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Goodbye Media Arts, Hello Journalism

by Hiba I, Reina J, Robin N.

Journalism is a new class that is taking over some of the responsibilities previously handled by Media Arts and Leadership. Journalism teacher Ms. Jacobs said, "Journalism was created to try to fill the immense void left by the loss of Media Arts and weekly announcements. The hope is that we can continue to inform students about upcoming Sheppard events and issues through a school magazine and have some fun with our social media accounts.".
This new class will also receive announcements in print form via the new "Trojan Times Magazine". The goal is that they can continue to inform students about upcoming school events and issues through a school magazine to get all the news and interesting stories out for Sheppard students to know about. Currently these student reporters are learning how to investigate stories, conduct interviews, and write news articles. Journalism at the same time will be posting short videos on Tiktok and Instagram! They want to inform students about what is happening at Sheppard and keep the fun spirit alive. Leadership used to handle all events; now that Leadership is no longer offered, Journalism will handle those responsibilities. As the newly confirmed ASB, they will take charge of spirit days, grams, and the Student Store, which will still take place this year.

Still, former Media Arts and Leadership students miss their class and would join again if given the chance. Mia Z, a former Media Arts student now in Journalism, said, "I love Media Arts because I used to have so much freedom, made many great friends, and it gave me so many opportunities to learn how to interview, edit, and make fun videos." Penny S, a former Leadership student, also had a similar response: "I miss being able to help do these things for students and would definitely love to come back to Leadership if it were possible."



Journalism students learning to make the Trojan Times magazine.

Students Complain about Restroom

By Olivia N , Annie N , Sherlyn H

Students at Sheppard Middle School have reported problems with paper towels, soap, and bathroom maintenance. Students say the bathrooms are usually clean, but sometimes they are dirty, out of supplies, and have wet floors. The school adds paper towels every two or three days, or when staff notice they are gone. These problems can affect students who use the bathrooms during the school day.Some students may notice that supplies are missing when they use the bathrooms. Students can report these problems so school staff know what needs to be fixed or replaced.
School staff clean the bathrooms daily and nightly to help keep them clean.The floors are one of the problems students have noticed when using the bathrooms. Staff may need to inspect areas to identify why floors are wet or dirty.
Ms. Lopez talked about a problem in the boys' bathroom. She said, "More urinals need to actually flush." The school staff may need to check them and see what is wrong. Fixing the urinals can help make the bathrooms better for students.
School janitor Luz Maria Alcaraz said, "We work hard, and maybe students could help to keep the restroom clean.¨ Her comment shows that students can also help keep the bathrooms clean. Students can put trash in the trash cans and leave the bathrooms clean for the next person.
When students and staff work together, they can help make the bathrooms a better place for everyone.
School bathrooms need regular cleaning and maintenance. Staff refill supplies and check bathroom equipment. These steps help keep the bathrooms working for students.



Ms. Johnstone

Staff Spotlight

Ms Johnstone has been teaching in Sheppard Middle School for 9 years. She enjoys teaching here because she loves the wonderful students here. She teaches S.T.E.A.M and hopes that her subject has a big impact to her students. She decided to be a teacher because she wants to help the younger generation. Many students really likes how she teaches and Ms Johnstone is very grateful for it.

Sheppard ScreamFest in Action!

By Mara P., Ariana M., Khalilah G., and Filipa M.

Get ready to scream! After a three-year break, ScreamFest is finally returning with the ScreamFest haunted house, DJs, food, and more on Thursday, October 29th from 5:30-7:30.

Sheppard's ScreamFest is most famous for the haunted house. The house will start in the girls locker room, weave through the mat room and end from the boys locker room. Mrs. Hernandez is the one who puts a lot of work into the haunted house, setting up everything, and working all by herself while the other PE teachers cover her classes.

"I have to close down the locker rooms, like cover down all the windows. I set up everything so that it doesn't even look like a locker room," 8th grade PE teacher Mrs. Hernandez says. "My favorite thing about ScreamFest is scaring the kids so badly they pee their pants."

"And watching them leave the locker room with a smile on their face." Sheppard students are able to get into the haunted house for free only once. If students want to go again, or if an adult is wishing to go, they have to pay $5 as an entry fee.

My favorite part of ScreamFest was the haunted house. "I loved how ominous and eerie it was," said Sheppard Alumni Kiana M.

"I'm excited for the jumpscares and the haunted house," 8th grader Ariana M says.

ScreamFest hasn't happened since 2023. Even though it takes up a lot of time, Ms. Hernandez wants to make sure that it happens at least once within the 3 years, because the Haunted house is a school tradition that has been happening since 2005. Make sure to bring friends and family so they can also experience the fun of the haunted house.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

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Sheppard Middle School Changes Back to the Traditional Schedule After Five Years

By Snow V. & Katie H.



Mr. Matsumoto teaching his 6th grade Social Studies class

Sheppard Middle School's five-year experiment with block schedule came to an end last year after staff voted 68% to 32% to go back to a normal 6 period day. It fell short of the 80% threshold required to keep the system. The traditional six-period day schedule is back, along with the loss of two important electives and advisory.

Around 68% of staff voted yes to keeping block schedule, citing benefits such as preparing middle school students for high school (especially Independence High School.) With block schedule, students and teachers don't need to deal with their 6 classes every day and teachers get to have a longer prep for one day of the week. Teachers noted that transitioning for each class is less stressful and students are better able to get into a steady workflow.

"We can really go into something without stopping and starting constantly," teacher Sarah Jacobs said.

On the other hand, 32% of teachers argue that the traditional schedule would help boost test scores and help ELD students thrive by providing a consistent routine. Teacher James Matsumoto said, "Improving test scores should be our main priority."

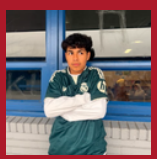
Because of the loss of block schedule, Sheppard students lost Media Arts and Leadership. Without Media Arts and Leadership, getting information out to students became difficult. Sheppard students must rely on Instagram or their teachers to give out information, such as spirit days. Not every student has access to Instagram, and information may not always reach every student.

Some students strongly dislike block schedule, while others appreciate it. Those who dislike them often feel frustrated by being stuck in a class for 90 minutes. They also mention that longer classes make it harder to stay productive and motivated. The students who do enjoy block schedules say they like having more time in classes they love. They also value the extended periods to focus on work.

Myalin G, a Sheppard student, has mixed feelings about the block schedule. She explained that she dislikes being stuck in a single class for 90 minutes because the longer periods make it harder to stay productive and motivated. However, Myalin appreciates having more time in the classes she loves, valuing the extended periods to focus deeply on her work.

Question of the Month

If you could add one club to our school, what would it be?



¨ I would want a food club.¨

Leon F, 8th grade



¨I would want a robot club.¨

Alex J , 8th grade



¨I would want a game club.¨

Jaden G, 7th grade



¨ I would want to have Art and Craft Club.¨

Valerie F, 7th grade



¨I would want a architecture club.¨

Caesar D,6th grade

THE TROJAN ZONE

TROJANS

Guess the Classroom



Guess the Teacher

Guess The staff members off the clues we give you!

-has never eaten a McDonalds burger
-49ers are their favorite team
-has been to Disneyland over 50 times!
-this teacher has a Golden Retriever
-does NOT play over their parking spot
-this teacher has two kids

Jokes of the Month

Halloween Jokes of the Month!
Why didn't the skeleton go to the halloween party?
Because he had nobody to go with!
Why are ghost bad at lying?
Because you can see right through them!
What do the witches use to do their hair?
Scare spray!
Why did the vampire read the newspaper?
He heard it had good circulation!

Puzzle

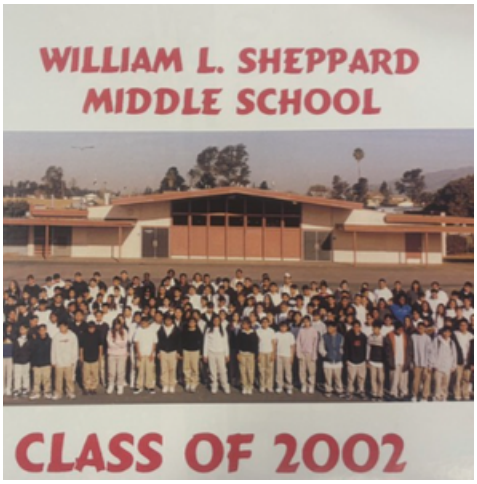


Art of the Month



Art by Andres G. 8th grade

Trojan Throwback



Spirit Days

October 30 - Halloween
November 6 - Flashback Friday - Dress as a previous decade
November 13 - Meme Day
November 20 - Adam Sandler Day -
December 4 - Sports Day - wear your favorite teams gear
December 11 - Dress as Little You Day - dress how you did as a little kid
December 14 - Winter Whiteout - wear white
December 15 - Grinch vs. Santa
December 16 - Dress as Elf
December 17 - X-mas Pjs
December 18 - Winter Athletic Wear

Creating a Safe School

Creating a safer school at SMS starts with respect and kindness. Students should feel safe asking for help and report bullying to a trusted adult. Teachers and staff support students by listening, enforcing rules, and making sure no one feels left out. Students can also help by standing up for others and treating everyone equally. By working together, we can make Sheppard a welcoming and safe school for everyone to learn.

Follow us on IG!

SMSTROJANS

Classroom: Mr. Beckham. Mystery Teacher: Ms. White

SPORTS SPOTLIGHT

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Every Mile, Every Milestone

by Aithy N, and Xzavier B



Cross-Country runners celebrating the end of a race

From summer training to official races, Sheppard's cross country team for 26-27 has come to an end. The team has competed in 5 meets and has fulfilled its goals throughout the season. Sheppard has competed against Morrill, Leyva, Piedmont, Boeger, Bridges, Mathson, Orchard, Valley Christian, Chaboya, Quimby, Rancho, Ocala, Davis, and Adelante.

On October 15, 2026 was the Gilroy meet which was one of the most important meets for Sheppard's Cross Country team. It was the county finals, and only two Sheppard Runners competed.

The Montgomery Hill meet on October 1 was an important meet for the team because it helped determine which runners would qualify for the county finals. The people who qualified for the county finals were Bryan N, Xzavier B, Arianna S, Thinh T, Phoenix S, Myalin G, Madison R, Katie Ho, and Alyson Ly. The meet also gave runners a chance to show how their training had prepared them for the real challenge they've been waiting for this whole season.

Out of the nine runners that qualified for Montgomery hill course, only two advanced onto the next round for Gilroy and represented Sheppard. Two Sheppard runners finished in the top 30 at county finals. The two were: Myalin G, 8th grade girls, who placed 3rd, and Arianna S, 7th grade girls, who placed 24th.

Sheppard cross-country runners trained before and during the season to improve their stamina, endurance, and race times. Some runners began training during the summer to prepare for the season. During practices, runners worked on conditioning to be prepared for each race.

The team is divided into different groups, including C-boys, C-girls, 7th-grade boys, 7th-grade girls, 8th-grade boys, and 8th-grade girls. These groups allowed runners to compete against athletes in their own grade and category.

The team competed on Thursdays or Fridays. Each meet brought a different course and new challenge for the runners. As the season developed, the courses became more difficult, pushing runners to improve with each race.

Team spirit was also an important part of the season. During meets, Sheppard runners encouraged and cheered for their teammates. They supported each other during races and helped keep their teammates motivated, and proved teamwork and sportsmanship was important to the team.

Prince G said, "As soon as the first section begins to run, all our teammates start cheering for us and motivate the people that are starting to run."

"I am not worried about any schools at all," Said Mr. Mahon. "None, Zero."

With five meets completed, Sheppard's cross country season has come to an end. Two biggest accomplishments that had been made for the 26-27 season for Sheppard's cross country team were the nine runners that qualified for Montgomery Hill after years, and Two Sheppard runners placing for county finals.

Gone But Not Forgotten: The Sports Sheppard Once Had

By Ariana Carranza and Bella Sanchez

Sheppard Middle School has offered several sports throughout its history, but three of them are no longer offered today. According to P.E Coach Johnstone, possible reasons softball, track, and wrestling ended include budget issues and a lack of available coaches. He also added, "The coaches probably get tired of coaching." These sports have been part of Sheppard's history since the early 1970s. Softball stopped and returned at different times with the final team ending in 2022. Meanwhile, track ended around 1998, and wrestling in 2002. After coaching softball at Sheppard for 20 years, Kevin Fuller, a S former softball coach, said, "It's just a good experience. I love softball. I like exercise. I miss it." At the time Kevin Fuller started coaching, he also said that Sheppard had almost 1,000 students but later on, the school had about 400 students.

The decrease in enrollment made it harder for Sheppard to find enough students to form teams. P.E coach Johnstone explained that there are no current plans to bring back track and softball due to the school recently adding cheer and flag football. However, wrestling could return if a qualified coach was available. Several students said that track, softball and wrestling should make a comeback. Summer V. said, "I think track should mostly make a comeback as it helps people in cross country practice more and more or they can enhance their skills more." A marking on the concrete near the staff room at Sheppard shows that the 7th grade softball girls' team, boys wrestling team, and the track team were all champions in 1978.

Although these sports are no longer offered today, they haven't been forgotten and still remain an important part of Sheppard's history.