



February 2023

Strong Black Woman Who are Making History

Michelle Obama **by Angela Hughes**

Michelle Obama was the first African-American First Lady of the United States. She has become a role model for so many young women and she has remained an important figure in history even after her husband, Barack Obama's presidency. She is also a lawyer, writer, and mother. She advocates for things such as healthy families, girls education, nutrition, and poverty awareness.

Michelle graduated from Princeton University with a bachelor's degree and received her jurisdiction doctor degree at Harvard University. Afterwards, she returned home to Chicago where she worked at the law firm Sidley and Austin and met Barack Obama. They were married in 1992. In 1996-2005 she worked in various positions at the University of Chicago Medical Center. During this time, she became a mother to her two daughters, Malia and Sasha.

While serving as the First Lady from 2008-2016,

she created the *Let's Move!* program. This program's purpose was to end childhood obesity by providing more nutritious food options in school and getting children to be active and healthy. She also led the *Reach Higher Initiative* to make students aware of job opportunities and the types of education that they need for those careers. This helped to inform and encourage students to further their education past high school and also improved the education of women. After leaving the White House, she has continued to participate in these projects that are helping people. She has also authored two best selling books, *Becoming* and *The Light We Carry* which continue to relay to her audiences her messages of health and positivity.



Strong Black Woman Who are Making History

Lizzo

by Emma Rivera

For Black History Month, I wanted to write about Melissa Viviane Jefferson, who we all know as Lizzo. Lizzo is a singer and rapper who is also talented at playing the flute. However, she is much more than a musician. Lizzo is an activist and someone who truly uses their platform for good. One example of this is when Lizzo won her 2022 People's Choice award. She didn't keep the moment for herself. Instead, she invited 17 activists on stage with her and talked about what they do, including advocating for equality, justice, LGBTQ+ rights, women's rights, and indigenous peoples rights among so much more. If you're looking to feel inspired, look up Lizzo People's Choice, it's hard to have dry eyes by the end. Lizzo is also making history in the music industry. Just a few days ago, she won a Grammy for Record of the Year, and she is the first Black woman to win this award since Whitney Houston won in 1994. Overall, Lizzo is certainly a celebrity that deserves her platform and all the praise she receives. Regardless of what is thrown at her, she continues to thrive and her success only grows as time goes on.



Rhianna

By Chloe Tasso

Robyn Rhianna Fenty is known to the world as Rhianna. She was born on February 20th, 1988, and has since become a famed superstar and a successful entrepreneur. She is a talented and well-respected R&B and pop artist, as well as an actress. She also has an extremely popular beauty brand called Fenty Beauty. Best known for her musical fame, she has 14 number-1 singles and has sold over 60 million albums. Throughout all of this, Rhianna has used her celebrity and wealth for good causes. At age 18, she created the Believe Foundation to help children with terminal illnesses. She also founded the Clara Lionel Foundation, named after her grandparents, which promotes disaster response as well as climate resilience. She has donated to the coronavirus relief effort, worked with many groups that focus on world injustice, and has participated in multiple protests with them. She may be most known for her music, but she is also a person who wants to make a positive impact on people's lives. As a celebrity, she has been leading the way as a model for others to follow since she was a teenager. A very recent event she performed at was the Super Bowl halftime show, showing the constant increase of her musical career. From business to philanthropy, Rhianna continues to have a great impact that many other performers should take note of. Her altruistic acts never seem to cease, and as time moves forward, it looks like her positive influence will grow as does her popularity.



Strong Black Woman

Who are Making History

Viola Davis

by Xavier Reid

On February 5th, Viola Davis became the 18th person, 4th African American, and 3rd African American woman to complete an EGOT - Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, Tony - when she won a Grammy for narrating the audio book of her memoir *Finding Me*. Though she had a bit of a rough childhood, her career has been full of numerous successes.

In 1996, Viola Davis made her debut on Broadway as Vera in August Wilson's *Seven Guitars*; the performance won her a Tony nomination and she has since become well known for performing in many of August Wilson's works. She would go on to make her film debut with a bit role in *The Substance of Fire*. Over the next few years she would continue to play bit roles and recurring roles in film and television, while still working on and off Broadway. She won a Tony for her portrayal of Tonya in August Wilson's *King Hedley II* and another for her portrayal of Rose in the Broadway revival of Wilson's *Fences*.

Davis has been nominated for several awards multiple times over the years for her work on films such as *Doubt*, *The Help*, and *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* - a film adaptation of another August Wilson play. In 2016, she reprised her role as Rose for the film adaptation of *Fences*, for which she won a Golden Globe and an

Academy Award. She became the first person of color to win the Emmy for Best Lead Actress for her portrayal of Annalise Keating on the show *How to Get Away with Murder*. Davis has acted in everything from Drama to Comedy, to Sci-Fi. And even superhero films. She first appeared as government official Amanda Waller in *Suicide Squad* (2016) and reprised the role for *The Suicide Squad* (2021) and the first season of *Peacemaker* (2022). It was recently announced that Waller will be getting her own show soon with Davis set to once again reprise the role. Her most recent role was as the warrior Nanisca in the 2022 historical drama *The Woman King*.

Viola Davis was previously the first Black woman to win a Tony, Oscar, and Emmy and now with this Grammy under her belt she has completed an EGOT. She is an extremely talented, and successful woman who made it out of poverty and achieved her dreams, but from the looks of it she has no intentions of slowing down anytime soon.



Black History in The Making: Two Students' Award Winning Choreography

By Xavier Reid

Candace Howe and Marie-Anne Jean are both children of Caribbean Immigrants who have been involved in the performing arts for most of their time as students in the Neptune Township School District; together they came up with the choreography for Scarlet Sound's set list this year, helping the group come in second place at the 2023 ICHSA Mid-Atlantic Quarterfinals. Candace - a senior - and Marie-Anne - a junior - both joined Neptune's a cappella group Scarlet Sound in their freshman years. Both young women are incredibly talented and have a love for performing; a love that is clearly on display when they're at a capella, which quickly became their prime interest. This year Scarlet Sound received a new director in Ms. Madeline Meier, who entrusted Candace and Marie-Anne with choreographing this year's set. Through a careful process of consideration, nomination, and voting, the group previously selected three songs that related to each other for the set: Rain by Grandson & Jessie Reyez, Him by Sam Smith, and Oh My God by Adele. Candace and Marie-Anne decided that they wanted their choreography to be meaningful, they wanted it to relate to each song and convey both the respective emotions and message of all three. Their love of a capella led to Candace and Marie-Anne studying numerous other groups and performances, as well as performances of the songs from the set list themselves in order to create the right choreography. And their hard work paid off. As Scarlet Sound prepares for their next big performance at Semi-Finals, the two are still thinking about how they can add to and improve

their award-winning choreography.

Looking a bit further into the future, both girls are nearing the end of high school. Candace - a senior - will graduate in just a few months; she plans to attend college where she will study law. As of right now, she's already been accepted to her dream school, Harvard University. Marie-Anne - a junior - will graduate next year; while she doesn't know where yet, she does plan to attend college and as part of Neptune's Poseidon program, when she graduates from high school she will do so with an associates in social sciences.

Scarlet Sound will now advance to Semi-Finals which will be held here at Neptune High School in the Michael T. Lake Performing Arts Center on March 25th. Tickets are already on sale and can be purchased at the link below.

https://varsityvocals.com/event/2023_ichsa_mid-atl_sf_neptune/



Welcome Mr. Ryan-Hannaway to NHS!

By Emma Rivera

Q. From your perspective, what is the main role of a VP? How does it differ from the role of a principal?

A. The main role of a vice principal is to assist everyone in the school. Supporting Dr. Rogo and enhancing education is important to Mr. Ryan-Hannaway.

Q. What school did you come from?

A. Bound Brook High School in Somerset County

Q. How long have you been in the education industry?

A. Mr. Ryan-Hannaway started in Long Branch as a counselor and has been in education for nearly a decade.

Q. Is this your first year being a VP? How long have you been one?

A. Yes, Mr. Ryan-Hannaway is a brand new vice principal and very excited to be at Neptune High School.

Q. What is your approach to motivating the students to have school spirit and school pride?

A. His approach is to build relationships with both the students and the staff at Neptune High School.

Q. Do you think you can improve the school overall?

A. Yes, Mr. Ryan-Hannaway definitely wants to help improve the school and thinks that the potential is limitless.



Welcome Ms. Weber to NHS!

By Emma Rivera

Q. From your perspective, what is the main role of a VP? How does it differ from the role of a principal?

A. Ms. Weber told me that she believes her main role is to support the school in any way needed. She loves working together and said that being a part of a team is “amazing”. She also thinks that interacting with students is a very important part of her job. Ms. Weber explained that being a VP is different from being a principal because vice principals tend to focus on specific things in order to help take some of the workload off of the principal, such as dealing with things like scheduling or testing, while the principal must see everything and tends to have more on their plate.

Q. What school did you come from?

A. Abraham Clark High School in Roselle, NJ.

Q. How long have you been in the education industry?

A. 17 years

Q. Is this your first year being a VP? How long have you been one?

A. This is not Ms. Weber’s first year as a vice principal. In fact, this is her 8th year being one. She began as a teacher in 2006 before moving to this role.

Q. What is your approach to motivating students to have school spirit and school pride?

A. Ms. Weber explained that although she has been an educator for a while, 2020 was her first high school experience. She noticed that post-pandemic, there was a major decline in

school spirit. She said that the most successful approach has been to get feedback from students and keep them involved rather than just having adults assume what they think the kids will enjoy. If students get a say, they are more inclined to participate because it will be something that they like. She mentioned that surveys are a great way to get student feedback and told me about a pep rally that took place in fall of 2022 in which students played games and had MC roles which made for a very interactive event.

Q. Do you think you can improve the school overall?

A. Yes. Ms. Weber stated that she never wants to go to a place and “just exist there”. She said that she loves working in the high school and interacting with students and that she wants to make an impact. Positive interactions with students are very important to her.

Q. What is an example of how you want to improve the school?

A. Ms. Weber talked about how her old school was very busy and hectic all the time. Here, she said, everyone has been very friendly. She wants to bring a sense of positivity and support to the students and Neptune High School so that students can make good decisions and come to her when they need to.



STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

Congratulations to the January
Students of the Month!

Freshmen- Joseph Rodriguez

Sophomore- Jasmin Alfaro Vargas

Junior- Franz Cetoute

Senior- Taniya Alston and
Hector Lopez

Congratulations to the February
Art Student of the Month Mads
Fernandez!



STAFF MEMBER OF THE MONTH

Congratulations to Mr. Walsh!!

ATHLETES OF THE MONTH



Congrats to our
February Athletes of
the month:
Soleil Walker
and
Jalen Weedon



Ant-Man and The Wasp: Quantumania Review: Why All the Negativity?

By Xavier Reid

On opening weekend I went to see the third installment in Marvel's Ant-Man trilogy: "Ant-Man and The Wasp: Quantumania" and as I left the theater, I had one burning question: what's with all the negativity surrounding this movie?

I was initially excited for Quantumania; after all this is the movie that was going to introduce Kang The Conqueror - a major comic book villain - and kick start Phase 5 of the MCU. However, as a flood of negative reviews came in the days prior to the film's release, I became concerned. I ended up heading into the film with mild expectations. And honestly...I was pleasantly surprised. Though not Marvel's best product, it was certainly far from their worst film they've put out.

Now, it's important to consider two things when taking a look at this film. The first is that Marvel has recently come under a lot of scrutiny for injecting their films with too much comedy - or attempting to as some believe that Marvel films aren't even funny. The second is that the Ant-Man films have always been the Marvel films that directly lean the hardest into the comedy genre. They have usually served as the light-hearted break from the cinematic universe's more serious stories. Taking that into consideration it may seem like an odd choice to introduce Kang - a famously brutal and very serious villain, who will serve as the main antagonist of Phase 5 - in the third Ant-Man film, and may give one the impression that the movie was destined to fail. And while Quantumania doesn't exactly deliver on the promise of brutality presented in its trailers, it does do a pretty good job of balancing out its humor with the seriousness of Kang - who Jonathan Majors does an excellent job portraying. Another issue about Marvel that's been brought up recently is that they are way too demanding when it comes to working with visual effects artists. It's been reported that those who aren't willing to agree to the working conditions are

essentially blacklisted and those that stay are stretched far too thin. Many have pointed to this during recent discussions about the downgrade in the quality of visual effects in MCU films. The thing is that some films have this new decreased quality while some have the older higher quality due to Marvel prioritizing certain projects. So, where does Quantumania fall? Well some shots hold that higher quality and some look a bit rushed, but nothing looks bad per say, though in this day and age I have seen better.

All in all, Quantumania falls right above mediocre. In fact, I'd go as far as to say that it is actually a good film. Which brings us back to my question. What's up with all the negativity? I think the answer lies in that last statement. It's good. Marvel has created a problem for themselves; they set the bar so high with most of their films, that they are now struggling to live up to their own expectations. Many viewers nowadays expect perfection from Marvel. They expect something that will radically top their next project. And the truth is just that they can't always do that. So, anything that can't be considered perfect is instantly considered garbage. And, it's true, Marvel has made some films that most people can agree they would almost never watch again. However, to me, Quantumania isn't one of them.



CLUB UPDATES

New Semester, New You! It is never too late to join a club and show your Flier Pride!

The **Art Club** is still going strong and will accept new members during the new semester. We meet twice a month on Tuesdays. If you would like to join please stop by room B142 to access the classroom code located outside the door. All meeting dates will be posted on the Google Classroom.

The Blazer is always looking for writers and photographers! We meet the first and third Tuesday of the month in the library. See Mrs. Kelly in the library for more information!

The Proteus has two new advisors: Ms. Kochel and Ms. Hanson. They are looking forward to getting your creativity published in this year's literary magazine!

STUDENT COUNCIL NOTES

The 1st Friday of the Month is Flier Pride Friday. Wear your Neptune Gear and show off your school spirit!