

Auto classes vye for top spot in Quaker State Challenge

Quaker State challenge gives opportunities for automotive interest

by Maya Kowitt

After last year's successful debut of the "Best In Class Challenge," motor oil brand Quaker State has launched their second year of the 6-week automotive education competition featuring high school automotive classes across the country.

Placing fourth in the challenge last year, New Trier automotives teacher Robert Spagnoli has high hopes of coming out on top this year.

New Trier was fortunate to apply for the program again. Fifteen schools vied from the Chicagoland area and received the most votes to become one of the five finalists in the country.

The automotives class was given a 2002 Ford Mustang and a \$2000 budget from Autozone. They must conduct a full restoration of the car, "Everything from air in the tires, to reprinting the car," Spagnoli said, noting that Quaker State and Autozone combine for this program.

Throughout the 6-week challenge, Spagnoli's 2nd and 3rd period automotive classes worked on the car, and even sometimes committed to working after school and Saturdays.

Senior and president of the auto motives class, Colin Chapman said,

"We worked on our vehicle every day and were frequently excursion end from class to work on the car." Chapman acknowledged the big time commitment of the project, stating that students would have to stay in the auto shop late at night and often had to make up class work and labs in order to complete work on time.

"I don't regret having to put in extra work elsewhere in order to participate in this once in a lifetime opportunity," Chapman said.

Spagnoli acknowledged that his students had no previous experience with car repair, "Going into this process, it's not like I taught them this stuff within the first few weeks of school. I warned the kids that if we do this it's gonna be a lot of work, and they were all for it," Spagnoli said.

Chapman described the class dynamic and the student involvement with the class.

"The majority of first year students join simply because they are interested in cars. Some students have very basic knowledge of cars their first years while others have already made auto motives a hobby in their life."

Chapman said that he joined the class his sophomore year because of his passion for cars.

"I love learning everything from basic engine maintenance, to customization and body damage repair. I also love working with my hands in the shop which is one of the reasons why I have continued to take the class every year," Chapman said.



Students from the Automotives class worked to build up a Ford Mustang for the Quaker State Challenge | Zervas

The Quaker State website explains that the challenge is "not your average extra credit assignment." Quaker State says the goal of the challenge is to empower the next generation of auto technicians.

"We invited schools across the country to compete in restoring clunkers into certified hot rods on a budget," announced Quaker State.

The five finalists go about this challenge as if it's a reality show, where a Quaker State film crew comes in and documents the process of restoring the car.

"The car is supposed to come in working condition, we had to fix everything. Every day something went wrong," said Spagnoli.

"The beauty of the whole contest is troubleshooting. For example, in week five we had an all school celebration, and while driving outside the shop, the alternator blew."

Occurrences like this can't be predicted and were very common

throughout the car repair process. "Last year our engine blew the day we got it," recalled Spagnoli.

Despite setbacks, a lot of things worked out in the class' favor. "At Wilmette Auto Body on the corner of Ridge and Lake, there's a gentleman by the name of Dean Fields, who let us come into the shop on Saturday and paint the whole car. We were there for 10 hours on a Saturday," said Spagnoli.

The winning team is decided during a Skype conference, where 2 celebrity judges in the automotive restoration industry, Tommy Pike and Mike Spagnola, decide the winning school and car.

The prize at stake is not only bragging rights, but also money that the winning team can put back into their auto shop to buy things like tools and equipment.

In addition to the prize money, the first place team gets the opportunity to go to Florida and

auction their car at Barrett-Jackson, which Spagnoli declares to be the "superbowl of car auctions."

In addition, Spagnoli describes our supposed "underdog" position in the competition. "Every other school we go against is basically this mega vortex center, almost as if you're going into a car dealership area, some even had uniforms to work in," he said. "Our class on the other hand, we're working with 500 square feet next to lawn mowers."

Though the auto shop class may not have the luxury of a spacious "dealership-like" center to work in, Spagnoli said that he is confident in their car and believes they can win the competition.

"I am absolutely proud of all the kids. From the time commitment they put into their expectations they met, and the limited size of our shop compared to other schools, there is simply no comparison to that," he said.

A Tribe Called Quest ends 18 year hiatus

A Tribe Called Quest returns to the music scene with a new album battling injustice

by Tia Rotolo

A Tribe Called Quest's has returned after eighteen years with a politically charged and emotional album, but for a new generation of listeners.

A Tribe Called Quest first rose to fame in the eighties after their sudden emergence on the scene. Rap music at the time was about speaking out against social injustice, and that's exactly what Tribe did.

Commonly regarded as classic, A Tribe Called Quest lead alternative hip-hop to recognition in popular media. They were taking risks with sound and speaking intelligently about important issues. This spirit has not left.

"We Got it from Here... Thank You 4 Your Service" was released on Nov 11, the Friday after the controversial election. The politically-driven album was in direct response to the presidential election, but more importantly, the current state of the country. The album tackles inequality in all of its forms.

The eighteen years between albums act as material for the group. Since 1998, America has seen the biggest terrorist attack in its history, the first black president, the Black Lives Matter movement, and even the death of Phife Dawg, one of ATCQ's members (he's still a large part of the album). A lot has changed. But Tribe hasn't.

They returned to the music



A Tribe Called Quest returns with new album, "We Got it from Here, Thank You for Your Service" | The Source

scene with the same tricks that made them memorable. Their sound is unparalleled and they're still using music as a call for justice.

The album begins with the song, "The Space Program." In the beginning, Phife Dawg and Q-Tip express that "It's time to go left and not right / Gotta get it together forever." These words set the tone for the left-leaning political outcry of the album, which promotes the belief that change is needed, and that it's up to us to make that change.

The obvious notes of social and political injustice are present on the first song, "The Space Program" which addresses the idea of inhabiting space in the future. The song admits that these opportunities wouldn't extend to those in poverty or minorities.

Q-tip acknowledges that it's futile to imagine ideas for advanced living when the current state, both environmentally and socially, needs improvement.

This idea leads to, "We The People." As the title would predict, the song is rooted in politics,

especially for marginalized people following the election. Speaking in direct opposition to President Elect Donald Trump, the hook by Q-Tip addresses that "All you black folks, you must go / All you mexicans, you must go / All you poor folks you must go / Muslims and gays, boy, we hate your ways."

Tackling Trump's bigoted comments, Phife Dawg and Q-Tip uses the song to remind listeners that marginalized groups will persist in America even with gentrification and isolation.

Phife Dawg delivers commentary on the perpetuated systems in America in "Whateva Will Be," a song that directly explains the current culture of inequality.

The song begins with Phife asking, "Say am I 'posed to be dead or doin' life in prison? / Just another dummy caught up in the system / Unruly hooligan who belongs in Spofford / Verse getting that degree at Stanford or Harvard." In these lines, he laments the all too common plight of the modern black male. Their circumstances limit them to a

life of achieving less, often ridiculed by the media. Phife asks listeners if they're amused by the struggle that goes unnoticed and unresolved.

"Their sound is unparalleled and they're still using music as a call for justice."

The album continues commenting on the current state of the country and promoting change. But A Tribe Called Quest doesn't complete the endeavor alone. The guests on the album are extensive and well-versed. Kendrick Lamar, André 3000, Anderson Paak, and Elton John offer words of their own wisdom.

Kendrick Lamar's verse on "Conrad Tokyo" parallels his grimy, emotional verses on "To Pimp a Butterfly."

As an obvious accomplice to an album rooted in social injustice, Kendrick Lamar uses the platform to assign responsibility to the

violence of a country, specifically, he says, "Every nation, Obama nation, let the coroner in."

In addressing Barack Obama, Lamar speaks about the "abomination" of having no one to take responsibility for the violent state of America.

Lamar continues with "Crooked faces, red and blue laces for the color of men." This line draws attention to the division between democrats and republicans, labels that now define perceptions. America, separated by political beliefs, resembles the hostility between Bloods and Crips, also adorning red and blue.

Lamar's contribution to the album asserts him as the new leader in the next generation of rap music expressed in "Dis Generation."

The album ends with the song, "The Donald." While the title anticipates a direct message to Donald Trump following the overarching note of the album, ATCQ instead uses the final song to reminisce on Phife Dawg's impact on the hip-hop community.

Busta Rhymes adheres to Phife's Caribbean heritage with Trinidad slang. Q-Tip remembers Phife Dawg as a legend, unparalleled in hip-hop. Phife Dawg even comes in, one final time, to express his dominance in rap.

While the song reminds listeners of Phife Dawg's lasting legacy in the rap community, it has a grander message. The final song could have been, and would presumably be, a final message to Trump. But Tribe doesn't mention his name in the final song.

They use it to speak about the power of community. For ATCQ, this is the rap community. Tribe uses the final song as a subtle reminder that there is a time for anger and change, but ultimately injustice will end when people learn to come together.