This Women's History Month, pay attention to the women making moves

By SOPHIE MURRAY
Associate Arts & Life Editor

Happy International Women's Month. A whole month dedicated to celebrating all the incredible, strong and beautiful women in the world. Their achievements, ambition and talent. And I have a good list of women worth celebrating.

If you're a man reading this, calm down, you're going to be OK.


ILLUSTRATION BY SOPHIE MURRAY

And let me address the comment I already know someone is thinking. No, men don't need a month to celebrate their achievements. Yes, every day is International Men's Day. Why? Because we're still living in a man's world. Women are constantly breaking barriers, but the system was built to give men the spotlight first. Disappointing? Yes. Shocking? No.

There are so many women out there doing incredible things and making a real impact, pushing boundaries and showing other women what's possible. While the world fawns over men's accomplishments, these women deserve all the recognition.

I feel like it's only right to start with Quinnipiac alumna and American rugby player Ilona Maher. Maher is a powerhouse on and off the rugby pitch. She competed in the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo and then led the U.S. Women's Rugby seven team to its first-ever medal at the 2024 Paris Summer Olympics.



Beyond the sport, she advocated for body positivity and challenged stereotypes women face about being muscular. Maher's message? Women can be strong, bold and muscular. Even though the world believes women need to be "fragile," she advocates that women can take up space and be proud of it. She even appeared on season 33 of "Dancing with the Stars," showing a strong and athletic woman can also dance, be graceful and put on a performance.

She's rewriting the rules on what women's bodies are capable of, and yes, it's making a few people uncomfortable.

In 2025, Maher won the Excellence in Sports Performance Yearly award for Best Breakthrough Athlete, and in her acceptance speech, she preached that being strong is whatever you want it to be: beautiful, powerful, sexy.

And in a world where female athletes are expected to fit into a narrow definition of femininity and success, Maher represents a future in which women in sports are free to be themselves.

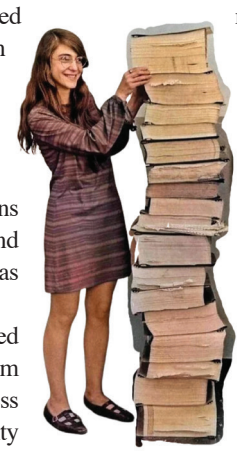
Then there's actress Emma Watson. Most know her for her roles in films like the "Harry Potter" series, "Little Women" and "The Perks of Being a Wallflower," but Watson's real magic happens off the big screen.

She does so much more than act. Watson actively promotes girls' education and gender equality worldwide.

In 2014, Watson was appointed a Goodwill Ambassador for UN Women, where she launched the HeForShe campaign to get men involved in gender equality.

She delivered a now famous speech at the UN Headquarters for the launch of the campaign. During the speech, Watson reflected on how she first questioned gender stereotypes at eight years old when she was labeled and ridiculed for being "bossy" while the boys got free passes for the same behavior. She also spoke about being sexualized by certain elements of the media at 14. Watson emphasized that feminism is often misunderstood as "man hating," when in reality it simply means that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities.

Since then, Watson has continued her advocacy work through speaking engagements, activism and initiatives promoting gender equality. She founded a feminist book club called "Our Shared Shelf," supported organizations fighting workplace harassment and helped launch initiatives, such as Time's Up UK.



Watson's advocacy has helped bring conversations about feminism to a global audience. Her willingness to speak openly about inequality and challenge misconceptions about feminism has inspired many people to join the fight for equal rights.

The 44th First Lady of the U. S. Michelle Obama, is a prominent advocate for women and girls globally, education, health and equality. She has been doing this through initiatives like Let Girls Learn, Reach Higher and Let's Move, basically telling us to get educated, dream big and eat our vegetables. Remember when school lunches suddenly seemed healthier? That was thanks to her.



Beyond policy initiatives, Obama has been a powerful cultural and motivational figure. Through her best-selling memoir "Becoming," public speaking and mentorship efforts, she has inspired millions of people to believe in their potential and use their voices. Her authenticity, advocacy for equality and commitment to empowering the next generation make her one of the most influential women of modern times.

And then there's the one woman you probably didn't learn about in your history classes, software engineer Margret Hamilton. During the Apollo 11 moon landing, a potentially mission-ending problem occurred just minutes before the lunar module touched the Earth's surface. The spacecraft's computer suddenly triggered multiple alarms indicating it was overloaded with tasks.

The mission was saved because of the onboard software that had been designed to handle those types of situations. The flight software, led by Hamilton, prioritized the most important operations needed for landing and temporarily ignored less critical tasks.

Thanks to Hamilton's innovative software design and built-in recovery systems, the computer was able to recognize the overload, sound alarms and continue operating with only the essential functions. This completed the first successful human landing on the moon.

Of course, when we think about the Apollo 11 moon landing, the names that people remember are astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin. But without Hamilton, the moon landing wouldn't have been possible. But, of course, why let a woman steal the spotlight? It's a reminder that behind every celebrated hero, there's often a brilliant woman who deserves recognition too.

This Women's History Month, take a minute to actually notice all the amazing things women are accomplishing every single day. From breaking barriers in sports, science and politics, to fighting for equality, starting movements or simply showing up and taking space in the world that often underestimates them, women are constantly shaping the world around us. It's a reminder to celebrate not only the famous names but also the women in our own lives who inspire, support and push us each day.

The fear behind overthinking

The mental cost of a brain that never stops running

By ANTHONY ANGELILLO
Copy Editor

My brain does not have a quiet setting. There is no off switch, no pause button and no moment where the noise just stops.

I overthink everything. Not in a casual way either, where I wonder if I locked the door, but in a way that turns the smallest moment into a full breakdown. A sentence I said three hours ago can follow me around all day, replaying on a loop until I have convinced myself that I didn't ruin something.

For people living with mental health disorders, this is not just a bad habit. Overthinking becomes part of how the brain operates.

A 2024 study published in Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy found that adults with ADHD show a strong indirect link between their symptoms and increased levels of anxiety and depression, driven by excessive mind wandering and rumination.

That study illustrates something I already know. My brain does not just think, it spirals. One thought leads to another, and before I realize what happened, I am three scenarios deep into a problem that does not exist yet.

Fear is what separates overthinking from just thinking too much. When you convince yourself that one mistake can define you, every decision carries weight that does not belong there. A missed assignment becomes proof that you are not reliable, while a wrong answer in class becomes a sign that you do not belong there.


ILLUSRTATION BY KATERINA PARIZKOVA

University of Michigan psychology professor Susan Nolen-Hoeksema found that 73% of adults ages 25 to 35 identified as overthinkers in a study of more than 1,300 people. Her research also showed that overthinking leads to increased depression, poor problem-solving and difficulty taking action.

Those numbers don't shock me. I see the reality in myself and in the people around me every week, especially in college, where the pressure is already high.

The 2024-25 Healthy Minds Study reports that 37% of college students screened positive for moderate to severe depressive symptoms and 32% screened positive for moderate to severe anxiety.

The hardest part is not the overthinking itself, but the fear that comes with knowing you can't control when the wave starts. You begin to worry about the worrying, overthink the overthinking. The loop tightens until even the smallest task feels heavy and you can't tell the difference between a real problem and one your brain invented.

A Psychology Today analysis describes overthinking as a protective strategy rooted in the brain's attempt to reduce uncertainty. Rumination, the clinical term for repetitive negative thinking, is strongly tied to anxiety, depression and emotional exhaustion, according to research from psychologists Nolen-Hoeksema and Edward Watkins.

I still catch myself replaying conversations and scanning every interaction for something I may have done wrong. When I make a mistake, the fear isn't about the mistake alone, but that I may never stop thinking about it.

That mindset shrinks your world. You hold back from saying what you mean because you're afraid of how people will take the words. You second-guess your work before you even finish because you have already decided the result is not good enough. You avoid risks that could help you grow because the thought of getting something wrong feels unbearable.

I do not have a clean answer for how to fix this, and I think that honesty matters more than pretending I have cracked the code. What I do know is that awareness helps, and sometimes I can slow the momentum before the day slips away.

Building a life around constant mental noise is exhausting, but ignoring the noise doesn't make the volume drop. The goal isn't to stop thinking, but to stop letting the fear of thinking wrong run every part of the day. That fight is not over for me, and I am willing to bet I am not the only one still in it.