

# THE GAUNTLET

## NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the September 2018 edition of *The Gauntlet*. I hope you will take time to read over the thoughts and stories presented by your fellow classmates. The Georgia Academy is home to a motley of gifted and passionate students. Let's celebrate that.

- Makayla Viridi

## IN(SCI)GHTS

Sarah Choi, brings you an tentalizing tale from the deep blue sea

START READING ON PG. 2



## STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

Thoughts of Second Year students,  
Bryce Bussert and Gabriel Loos

START READING ON PG. 3



## SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT

An interview with an esteemed  
Academy Alumnus

START READING ON PG. 5



## Special Thanks to

- Bryce Bussert
- Sarah Choi
- Gabriel Loos
- Endure McTier
- Hannah Peeples
- Dev Patel

# in(SCI)ghts

By: Sarah Choi

Welcome back to *in(SCI)ghts*, where we explore the particularly quirky, odd, or outright disgusting scientific discoveries made by renowned professionals (or extraordinary novices) throughout the month. If reading actual science journals make you feel so frustrated to the point that your head might explode (this can actually happen; a chess player once died in the middle of a championship game) or searching the web for the latest science news is far too laborious for your exhausted fingers, please continue reading. I hope you'll realize that our world is considerably stranger than you once perceived.

## TOPIC 2: ECSTASEA

You may have heard of this miserable substance called 3,4-Methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA) before, and if you haven't, then you've probably heard of its lesser known name: ecstasy. Humans have used it for years to obtain those warm feelings of fake happiness produced through MDMA binding to a protein in neurons and causing massive amounts of serotonin, a neurotransmitter related to pleasure, to flood out. Users tend to get intensely emotional and empathetic before usually falling into a pool of depression because of their now-depleted supply of serotonin. The genetic code for the protein that MDMA binds to is stored in a gene called SLC644, and interestingly, octopuses' genomes contain this same copy of SLC644 in their genome as well. So, in the name of science, as published in *Current Biology*, Researchers decided to see if they could get octopuses high off of the drug as well. After placing four

California two-spot octopuses in a tank containing liquefied ecstasy which was absorbed by the animals through their gills, the researchers decided to place them individually into a three-chambered water tank for thirty minutes. The first chamber was empty. The second chamber contained a plastic action figure that might stir some interest. The third chamber contained an octopus of the opposite sex under a cage. The experiment was conducted outside of mating season, and octopuses are usually quite antisocial except for during that time period. However, as the study showed, every one of the octopuses spent a significant amount of time longer in chamber three than in the other two. And just like they would during mating season, the drugged octopuses hugged and put their mouthparts on the cages containing the other octopuses in inquisitive, nonaggressive ways. Other than the fact that octopuses do get high off of ecstasy, the findings indicate that humans and octopuses have similar brain functions influencing social actions. For now, however, further research must be conducted before jumping to the conclusion that octopuses can be used to investigate our own brains. That being said, don't do drugs because you aren't an octopus.



# STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

## Bryce's Bubble

**Psalm 19:1 “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.”**

This past weekend I was in McDonough for Confluence, a conference for collegiate Christian students all over Georgia. I went with MGA's local chapter of the Baptist Collegiate Ministries (BCM) and we had a great time meeting new people, hearing from great speakers, and enjoying the weekend. As the weekend ended, we loaded up the bus and headed back to school, but the ride back home proved more interesting than anything that happened during the conference. I struck up conversation with a friend of mine named Aaron and he began to share a little bit of his life's story. Aaron grew up as a missionary kid in China where his family worked to share Jesus with the people around them. Given my interests in language, I was very curious to see what Aaron could tell me about the Chinese language and culture. Aaron asked to borrow my notepad and sketched out the Chinese character 船 meaning “boat.” He then explained that the three parts of this word each carry a separate meaning that together means boat. The character (or radical as they are called) on the left means “life-saving device”. The

two characters on the right mean eight and mouth. Apparently, in Chinese culture you count people by the number of mouths and thus the word for boat is derived from a life-saving device with eight people on it. Now, why would the Chinese word for boat include eight people? Why not ten, or eleven? Can you think of any boats with eight people on them in antiquity that might explain this oddity? What about Noah's Ark? Now, you might think that I'm crazy for suggesting that the world's oldest written language contains tangible evidence that a biblical flood actually happened, but why else would a language with no Christian background reflect the stories of the Bible? This actually makes sense if you assume, as I do, that the stories of the Bible aren't simply old tales and legends but true. But if the flood story is true... then the rest of the Bible must be true... and that means that there really is a Holy God who loves us and sent His Son Jesus to die on the cross to pay for our sins.

Now is when that whole feedback thing that I mentioned last month comes into play: I want to hear what you guys think about this story. Is there any part of it that just doesn't add up? Are there any other questions that this leaves you with? Do you have an

explanation for this that doesn't involve the Bible's story of Noah? Feel free to shoot me an email, text, snap or (preferably) just find me in person and we can talk about it. I won't pretend to have all of the answers and I think we both might learn something. I'm looking forward to hearing from you guys!

## The Art of Trying

When I joined the Georgia Academy, I thought I could do the same thing I did in high school, just show up and do the minimum amount of work required, and I would get an A. That's not what happened.

My first semester while it was not good, was not a complete disaster. I did the minimum amount of work and put in the least amount of effort and pulled out three B's and two A's. I think throughout the entirety of that semester I studied a total of two times. I was more or less whatever about it but told myself I would try harder next semester. My mom was extremely upset with me and constantly told me to study. This did not help because I hate it when my mom tries to tell me how to live my life. She was constantly telling me to study and the more she told me the more I wanted not to study. As a result, my mom would then tell me to study more and try to force me to study. I, being the defiant teenager I was, decided my mom couldn't make me do anything, so I wasn't going to do anything. I stopped caring about school. I didn't study. I barely did any homework. I would show up to class but not pay attention and as a result, at midterm, I had four C's and one B. I still didn't care. I just kept saying that eventually it would all work out, and I would be fine. It wasn't until a then senior at the program asked me "Why even be here if you're not going to try?" that

I actually became motivated to do something about it. I was motivated by not wanting to be a failure. I didn't want to have to go back and say that I was in college as a high school student but wasn't good enough. I tried for the rest of the semester and was able to pull all my grades up to B's. They weren't the best, but considering I was borderline failing basically all my classes at midterm, they weren't the worst. But I also could have never gotten myself in the situation to begin with.

After all this, I've now really ruined my chances to get into a good school such as Georgia Tech. Not only did my GPA take a nosedive, but when I needed to take the ACT and do really well, I didn't even attempt it. I did take the ACT over the summer but it was the summer so I got lazy and didn't do well on it. I do now care about my grades, and I am currently trying to bring up my GPA as much as possible, even though it's a bit late for that. It really hurts that I've put myself in this situation. There isn't anything I can do about the past. I have to live with that. I have learned from this though, which is about the only good thing. I learned my greatest fear, being a failure. Now, I am actively trying to do well in my studies. I'm currently taking challenging courses, such as Calculus Based Physics, and I am trying extremely hard. Not because I was told to, but because I want to.

**Want to be featured in  
Gauntlet?**

Submit your work to [Makayla.Virdi@mga.edu](mailto:Makayla.Virdi@mga.edu) by

11:30 PM on the last Monday of each month.

# SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT

## ENDURE MCTIER

The Georgia Academy of Arts, Mathematics, Engineering, and Sciences is proud of its students, past and present. This edition of *The Gauntlet* brings you an interview with a recent graduate whose story is sure to motivate you.

### Why did you decide to attend the Georgia Academy?

I wanted a challenge that I felt was deficient at my home high school. Moreover, I wanted the autonomy found in a boarding school like setting as well as the chance to earn an Associate's degree.

### How would you describe your time at the Academy?

My experience at the Academy was indescribable. I met many different people and broadened my intellectual horizons. At the Academy, I discovered who I truly was, academically and socially, and what is truly important to me. GAMES allowed me to decide where I wanted to attend for university and what I wanted to major in. Through classes like World Literature, World Civilizations, and Sociology, I have decided to pursue Philosophy and the humanities, with the intention to attend law school.

### What are you most proud of from your time at the Academy?

I am proud of the leadership roles that I took on during my time at the academy. Positions like Editor of the Gauntlet Student Newspaper and Peer Tutor at my high school were titles that I took on due to the confidence and other skills that I gained at the academy. I also joined clubs that furthered my

interests such as Performing Arts club, Fashion club, and History club.

### Is there anyone who heavily impacted your Academy experience?

I am extremely grateful to GAMES leadership, mainly Brian Warren and Susan Collins. They allowed me to define, and redefine, myself and they pushed me to be my best. I also am grateful for amazing professors like Lorraine Dubuisson, Rebecca Nees, and Tracie Provost. They fostered my love for learning and directly impacted my academic trajectory with stimulating conversation and other interaction.

### Where will you be continuing your studies?

I will be continuing my studies at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. Boola, Boola!

### What is your chosen area of study?

I will study Philosophy and double minor in Humanities or Classics and Economics. I will eventually attend Law school and practice Copyright law or Wealth Management law.

### Do you have any advice for current Academy students?

My advice is that: You need to be disciplined. This isn't high school: teachers don't care if you come to class or fail. You are not going to be coddled. If you do your work and be nice to others, you should have a pleasant time. You only have one life to live. This is an amazing opportunity to meet new people and experience work on a collegiate level. Expanding your network and boosting your resume is never a bad idea. Joining the academy would greatly benefit you. Give it a try.

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new look!**

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