

The

SCHOLARS JOURNAL



SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT: GAVIN WILSON

“Gavin Wilson is a freshman studying entrepreneurship and is a great example of what it looks like to be a scholar that tackles whatever is given to him. He is a super hard worker, and his extroversion and people skills truly make whoever he talks to feel seen.” - Submitted by a fellow scholar. Congratulations on your recognition and keep up the great work, Gavin!

FEATURED

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Dear Scholars,

The submissions for this month's issue of the Scholars Journal were so heartfelt and I greatly enjoyed reading through them all! Though not every submission could make it in to this issue, I hope that the ones in here bring a mix of joy, reflection, and appreciation to everyone who takes a moment to read through them. Keep up the amazing work scholars, you are all doing such incredible things!

-Stephanie Felhofer

MICRO-ADVENTURES

BRIDGET BOWER

Griff Washburn is a touring musician under the name Goth Babe. He uses simple software and acoustic instruments to write and produce his own music and has grown from a small artist to gaining attention now with larger following across many platforms with nearly 2 million monthly listeners on Spotify. He has partnered with brands such as Chaco, Toyota, and Seager to support his sustainable and outdoor passions.



In May of 2025, Griff released a documentary style video on his YouTube channel, Weekend Friend, titled "How Micro-Adventures May Save Your Creativity & Drive." Griff explained how as a creative, his drive and ideas sometimes hit a wall in certain stages of producing or writing. He discovered the concept of 'micro-adventures' and the effect on his creative process and overall wellbeing. This concept was first introduced by a British adventurer by the name of Alastair Humphreys who made the connection that avoiding opportunities outside your comfort zone prevents discomfort which stunts creativity, productivity, and drive. In his video, Griff showed how taking a free night to camp, fish, surf, or hike while being unplugged and mostly independent from the convenience from everyday living would help to reset and reinspire his creative juices. Away from the modern reliance on appliances, running water, guaranteed light sources, and everything else we so easily take for granted it is easy to find ourselves out of touch with what is most important.

I watched this video soon after it was released and while I enjoyed it, I didn't really think much of it until more recently, when I started doing micro-adventures of my own. Growing up I was fortunate enough to have lots of exposure to the outdoors and I have always had passion for the outdoors whether it be camping, hiking, kayaking, or fishing so I knew that these micro-adventures could help to serve as a reset too.

In the past year of occasionally doing these quick day trips or camping nights I have found that it really does work. I've taken out my kayak or going fishing with my brother, gone of hikes at state parks, and hiked new trails on my breaks as a camp counselor. Even this semester I have found time to do quick resets. I have made quick trips down to the waterfall and river or even getting to camp twice during away tournaments.

Even if you don't particularly consider yourself to be outdoorsy, I encourage you to try something simple, a short hike or bike ride, visit a local park or make a short trip to a state park for a day trip. If you always take the same sidewalk or trail try a different one, bring a friend to a lake you haven't visited yet and have a picnic. And if you are more outdoorsy, don't be afraid to keep getting out there even if you only have a little time.

THANK GOD FOR MAMA

JAYI WILSON

Growing up, gospel music was always playing in my house. My mom loved gospel music, especially the songs by Kanvee Adams. She would play her music so often that I eventually knew almost every song by heart. But one song that always stood out to me was *Thank God for Mama*. When I was younger, I did not think much about the meaning of the song. It was just one of the songs my mom played. Now, whenever I hear it, it takes me back to Sunday mornings in Liberia and reminds me of my mother in a completely different way.

Sunday mornings never felt like regular days. They felt like a reset. I would wake up to my mom asking, "Are you ready for church?" Meanwhile, my aunts would already be cooking. I could smell the palm butter, sometimes cassava leaf or even pepper soup filled with spices in the air. Our houses were very close together, and next to my mom's small house was my grandparents' house. My mom's room was small with one bed, while my grandparents' house was much bigger and more spacious. I would usually go over to my grandparents' house to get ready for church.

Sometimes my mom would take forever getting ready, and while I waited for her, I would sit on a big rock outside. This rock watched me grow and, to be honest, grew with me. It was the rock I would sit on whenever I was happy, sad, or mad. Every Sunday while waiting for my mom, I would sit on that rock and talk to my friends or people walking by. My aunts would also ask who wanted soup because when people cooked in the community, they would often share food with each other. Everyone always seemed to be doing something. People were washing clothes, cleaning, cooking, restocking, or preparing for the next week. Somewhere in the middle of all of this, my mom's gospel music would be playing.

Then I would hear, "Mama, I thank God for you."

At the time, I did not realize how much those words would eventually mean to me. The song talks about a mother's sacrifices. It talks about a mother waking her child up for school, praying for her, and doing things for her because she knows what is best for her. Listening to it now makes me think about my own mom. She did those same things for me. She would wake me up in the morning, pray over me, carry me to school, and pick me up. After we came home from church on Sundays, she would wash my uniform so I could be ready for Monday. As a child, I did not think about these things as sacrifices. To me, that was just what my mom did.

THANK GOD FOR MAMA (CONTINUED)

But the song does not only remind me of my mom. There is another part of it that makes me think about my dad. In the song, the mother gets burned while saving her daughter. The daughter becomes ashamed of her mother and does not want her friends to see her because of the scars.

That part reminds me of my dad because growing up, my dad had also been burned. When I came of age, I remember feeling embarrassed about my friends seeing him. I was worried about how they would react. Looking back now, I realize I was too young to understand how to process those feelings. Instead of thinking about what people might think, I now think about everything my parents sacrificed for me.

That is what makes this song so different for me now.

I am no longer with my mom, so I do not hear this song the same way I did when I was younger. Back then, she was the one playing the song. Now, I am the one who plays it to remember her. Especially on Mother's Day, I will listen to it and tears will fall down my face because I miss her. The song brings me back to those Sunday mornings, to my mom telling me to get ready for church, to my aunt's cooking, to sitting on that big rock, and to a time when I did not realize how special those ordinary moments were. When I was younger, I heard the song because my mother played it. Now, I play the song because I want to feel close to her. A song that was just simple gospel music now means the world to me as a reminder of the love, prayers, and sacrifices that helped make me who I am today. Every time I hear *Thank God for Mama*, I think about my parents and how grateful I am for everything they did for me. Because of them, I am here. And when I hear *Thank God for Mama*, I truly do.



THE BEAUTY ALL AROUND

ALICIA FULLER



As Dr. Heimovics tells us in every class: “Science is magic that works”. Yellowstone National Park was ripe with examples. From the thermophiles living in the sulfur pools to the iconic geysers there was not enough time to appreciate all the park had to offer. I took the picture above in an area near the sulfur pools and I could not help but linger.

The area was sparse of diverse plant life and animals were scarce. The water was colorful with shades of rust, vibrant blue, and deep green due to the microscopic organisms that inhabit the pools. The water bubbled violently and steamed with putrid odor. The smell lingered on the wind.

When I first stumbled on this area I seemed to be the only tourist giving this through path a second glance. I was reminded of home. The marshes found around numerous lakes and swamps do not appear different from the vegetation above. Seeing something so familiar from home in a place so far and different created a pause. From where I was standing, I could make out what looked to be big patches of grass and leafy plants with maybe some algae at the edges. My interest in the algae had the camera pressed to my face and zooming in the edge where I noticed growth. What I found was far different than what I initially thought.

The organisms grew far below the water's surface. What I thought was grass appeared to be some form of moss. Were the mounds of straw-like substance from animals? My first assumption was that they were. Further observation gave rise to doubts. As I tried to piece together what I was seeing—the cute little flowers, the interesting underwater growth, the mound of straw—I finally noticed a huge difference: the water was boiling. These delicate little flowers, all the mossy bits, and the grasses were simmering away in this far less dramatic, yet seemingly inhospitable ecosystem. All this to say science is, indeed, magic that works.



GRANDE CASCATA

ELIZABETH CARDENUTO



The image above shows the beautiful waterfalls in Tivoli, Italy. This waterfall is called the Grande Cascata (the English translation is the Great Waterfall). Encouraged to use the first free weekend wisely, twelve members of the Rome Empower set our view on Tivoli, Italy. During the hour train ride, we saw gorgeous mountains and experienced nature from outside the city borders. During the first night, we explored the streets of Tivoli. The following day we went to the Gregorian Villa and walked on the Neptune's Cave trail. Through the Neptune's Cave trail, we learned about how the Grande Cascata used to be a bigger waterfall but changed because of industrial reasons.

AS SEASONS CHANGE

ANONYMOUS

Fall brings about lots of changes in the environment. As such, it serves as a great reminder to evaluate how we change as people. As the leaves change from green to pretty reds, oranges, and yellows - how can we channel this to refine our character? One way we can aim to do this is by strengthening our virtues. By creating positive habits, we can grow in virtue and change into more beautiful people, just like the leaves. Additionally, the autumn season brings together people for celebration. With holidays like Halloween, Autumnal Equinox, and Thanksgiving, fall calls us to share and gather with others who are important to us. Taking this intention to heart within ourselves can produce a variety of outcomes. It can inspire us to be more grateful for our lives, challenge us to strengthen our relationships with others, and remind us to celebrate the little things. Whether it's a small compliment you received or a good grade on an exam, being appreciative for everything can make us happier. Developing this mindset prior to the winter season can help maintain our well-being in a time with little sunlight and vitamin D. Lastly, fall brings about a new way of life, one of preparation. As animals prepare to migrate or hibernate, we can challenge ourselves to prepare for something we want to achieve in the future. As students, this could look like creating habits that will help us to stay on top of our work or help us prepare for exams and finals. Personally, I plan to focus on changing my mindset. I want to reframe my view to always see the positive as opposed to jumping to negative views right away. The fall season is here and as honors students, we should take it upon ourselves to be inspired by the season and to focus on changing something in our lives for the better. So, what are you going to do to better yourself?



TEMET NOSCE

CHRISTIAN SZEJDA

Stifled are ideas of those afraid
 In silence, they accept their final throes
 Lest they bring shame alongside their maker's woes
 Erroneous are said to be my words, but I remain undismayed
 Noble is understanding, yet many leave it gainsaid
 Come see the crimson of their cheeks, hiding in darkness as if ill
 Early does the sun rise, yet only I stand and appreciate the warmth it infills
 Hostile is their jealousy, spouting lies of supposed wisdom displayed

Opening my palm, I smile as I beckon them
 Lucid are my desires, prompted by my silent loneliness
 Distraught by their prideful toxicity, its hideousness shown in exanthem
 Wherefore are you doubtful, friend? I say to the clique of monotonousness
 They laugh, assuming themselves self-righteous, and scorn in tandem
 Expectorating at my feet, they slur and shout ad hominem

Rapacious, they lurch their bony white forelimbs, jostling each other callously
 Their nails claw at me in trepidation, their eyes coveting my complexion
 Only the smell of roses accompanies me, as my palm closes around erudition
 And I, heliotropic like the flowers, embrace love in creation indebtedly
 Heed us. They whisper and beg in desperation, sobbing hysterically
 But my silence only exacerbates them, prodding their skin in satisfaction
 In darkness, only light unveils the truth, igniting surfaces in succession
 Because in silence, they accept their final throes, stifled in the ash unanimously

TOMMIES IN THE COMMUNITY

EMMANUELA ONYEKWELU



I completed the Twin Cities Marathon for the first time this past Sunday. The run up summit hill was my absolute favorite part as we got to run right in front of UST! Fans and family members made the whole day so memorable and the pain more bearable. Seeing students and faculty volunteering made me so grateful to be a part of a supportive community.

A TRIP TO REMEMBER

CECILY WINTERFELDT

Halo, scholars! I have been studying abroad in Australia this semester, and since I am in the Southern Hemisphere, I just got to go on my spring break trip to Bali, Indonesia! Here is a picture I took at a Balinese Hindu temple from the 14th century that overlooks the Indian Ocean. Certain parts of the temple were closed off to tourists for prayer, so it's pretty cool that this ancient temple is still in use.



My friends and I got to watch a traditional Balinese dance here, called a "Kecak", meaning a "fire dance". Dozens of men chanted in a circle while dancers in ornate costumes resembling different animals and figures told a story surrounding a fire. And the cherry on top was that we got to watch it at sunset! Experiencing Balinese Hinduism was the most special and overwhelming show of culture that I have experienced in my lifetime, inspiring me to want to travel around more places where Christianity is not the dominant religion. I am now back in Australia but I will forever cherish my time in Bali!



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