



## FROM THE POLITY

### A Response to And the Dish Ran Away With the Spoon

I have recently read an article written not too long ago concerning the ecosystem and possible imbalance thereof among Dining Hall cutlery. The study of this particular ecosystem and its functioning and ecological niches being still quite nascent, I find it proper to show the fruits of my own inquiries here.

The question is as to the fluctuating populations of two species of spoon in the dining hall, particularly the large and rotund soup spoon (*Cochlear jurulentum*) and the comparatively smaller and more narrow tea spoon (*Cochlear theaticum*). Among various more subtle differences, we find that the most prominent morphological distinction between these species is in the shape of the food receptacle, which in *C. jurulentum* is far greater in volume, and more circular in shape: that of *C. theaticum* being, in addition to its comparative smallness, more tapered toward the anterior end, which distinction in anatomy is indicative of the disjunction of their ecological niches; this disjunction is confirmed by their separate population fluctuations, which was noted by the esteemed and ingenious gentleman Mr. Briggs. The extension of this conclusion to a predator-prey relationship, however, must be examined in more detail.

While it is true that the sequential decline and rise of *C. theaticum* is characteristic of this relationship, it is not yet altogether clear whether this relationship is reflected also in the populations of *C. jurulentum*. For it remains to be seen whether the increase in the population of *C. theaticum* is accompanied by a correlative increase in that of *C. jurulentum*: the latter's prevalence during the dearth of the former is not necessarily due to an actual increase in their numbers, but could be merely an increase in proportion. It is therefore still quite possible that the populations of these two species are largely independent of each other, and that the decline of *C. theaticum* is its own phenomenon. The hypothesized explanation for this decline, then, could be a scarcity of their primary food source; certainly I have found that I have been drinking more tea in the Dining Hall after *C. theaticum*'s reappearance.

Tarik Mahmud

## BOARD OF VISITORS AND GOVERNORS MEET IN ANNAPOLIS

### Board Announces Fund for Improving Tutor Pay, Discusses Finance, Enrollment and Retention

The Board of Visitors and Governors met again on the Annapolis campus this semester from the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February to the 24<sup>th</sup>. While the board members were in town for the meeting, a rededication ceremony was held for Campbell Hall, now to be named Edensword Hall, in honor of Karen Pritzker's father. The renovations currently underway at that building were made possible by a \$15 million grant by the Jay Pritzker foundation and are expected to be completed by the end of the summer. Speakers at the event included Santa Fe president Mark Roosevelt, Annapolis president Nora Demleitner, Board Chair Warren Spector, and future Edensword RA Peter Quinn.

During the meeting itself, a major announcement made was the creation of a fund for tutor and staff compensation. Spector said that in order to recognize Mark Roosevelt's retirement, it was decided to focus on fundraising for salaries. An idea was proposed by vice-chair Pamela R. Saunders-Albin, in conjunction with Roosevelt, to create this special fund. The fund has received contributions from all the board members, and currently eight of the ten million dollars needed have been raised, with fundraising on track to meet the goal by the summer.

This fund comes at a time when tutor salaries have been at the forefront of conversation in Annapolis, with a walkout held earlier this year to protest wages which have been largely stagnant since 2008, and were not properly adjusted for rising cost of living. This was especially seen to hit junior faculty members harder, due to the pay system for St. John's tutors, where faculty receive a step increase every year at the College, which lets them progress from a minimum salary while beginning at the college to a maximum salary 1.82 times the minimum. "The most important thing to do in the short term is to raise junior faculty salaries, but in the long term, we need to raise all faculty salaries," said Spector. Susan Paalman, Annapolis dean, who called on the board to address the issue at the previous board meeting, noted the urgency of the issue, given increased cost of living and the loss of qualified new tutors due to the low salary. She thanked the board for addressing it now, saying "this could not have come at a better time... This will give the community hope, and help us through difficulty."

This fund will allow the minimum salary to be raised to \$70,000, and also allow for 2% annual increases,

separate from the normal annual step increases. While this is still below inflation, it is an improvement from the previous situation in which no adjustments were made for inflation at all. The fund will also cover increases for staff, although these increases were not detailed in the board meeting.

This fund should be sufficient to provide these increases for seven years, and afterwards the salary funding must be picked up by the College's general fund. "This is vital to the future of the College," said Spector, "I want to make sure the faculty knows we recognize their sacrifices." Roosevelt concurred, adding that "No matter what differences there might be [between the board and faculty], they are all immaterial, compared to the enormous respect we have for the faculty."

Although the Board has managed to find a way to fund these much-needed increases to pay, many financial challenges still loom large for the College, and were discussed at the meeting. In addition to the fiscal year 2024 deficit, they are projecting a five million dollar deficit in fiscal year 2025, with increasing deficits in fiscal years 2026 and 2027. These are primarily caused by continued high costs of building maintenance and salaries, while tuition revenue is still below where it was in 2008. The College's shift to a philanthropy focused funding model has helped alleviate this but has not been able to meet all needs yet. However, major bequests of several million dollars are expected in the next few years, which should remove some of the pressure on the college.

One of the important financial considerations is the endowment, which has reached record sizes recently thanks to Hodson funds and other donations. It currently totals about \$250 million. However, yields from the endowment have been lower than expected, with the seven year rate of return being 7%, lower than the passive benchmark rate of return. To address this, the board has begun a search for a new manager for the endowment.

Another topic of discussion was enrollment, with incoming freshmen classes so far projected to meet goals on both the Annapolis and Santa Fe campus. In Annapolis, the target enrollment is 140 to 150 students, with 100 to 110 students hoped for in Santa Fe. Demleitner noted the success (*Cont on page 2.*)

## This Week in Seminar

### Freshman:

- 2/29: Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics, Book X
- 3/18: Aristotle: Politics (*See list for selections*)

### Sophomores:

- 2/29: Montaigne: Essays, III, 13 (Of Experience)
- 3/18: Machiavelli: The Prince

### Juniors:

- 2/29: Locke: Second Treatise of Government, Chapters X-XIX
- 3/18: Jane Austen: Pride and Prejudice

### Seniors:

- 2/29: Freud: Beyond the Pleasure Principle
- 3/18: Dostoevski: The Brothers Karamazov

## Friday Night Lecture:

No Lecture due to break

## Upcoming Events:

No regularly scheduled activities because of Spring Break. If, however, you will be on campus during the break, the following event will be occurring:

Saturday 3/2: Day trip to Andrew and NC Wyeth Studios, run by the Mitchell Museum. Sign up at the Museum office.

## THEOLOGICAL DEBATE:

### Angelic Respona

Written by I, El'ad son of Asher the scholar, son of Shimon, may his memory be a blessing.

To Benettus Scottus and Andronicus Manifold and all the holy Kahal of St. John's College in Annapolis Maryland, may the spirit of God rest upon them and may the Lord keep and protect them all.

In a letter addressed to me a question of grave importance to the practical exercise of faith was posed: How many angels may fit upon the head of a pin? I am flattered by the reaching to me for an answer, a sign of great praise and esteem. Verily, I am one of the most humble scholars of the west, and not fitted to answer questions posed by such learned men, but as you have written me, I have no choice but to give some semblance of a response.

The existing opinions on this are quite confounding. The Rambam says that *the angels are not material bodies, but only forms distinguished from each other*, which would seem to indicate that no angel could fit on a material pin. Scottus argues an angel could, however, and it is also known that Angels may touch

things in contact with those they are ministering to, as it is written, *and once the fetus emerges into the airspace of the world, an angel comes and slaps it on its mouth, causing it to forget the entire Torah, as it is stated: "Sin crouches at the entrance."* Thus, since the torah is a physical object in the mouth of a new born child, it can be touched by the angel as it belongs to its charge. Hence, it is possible for an angel to touch a pin, if a man be touching the pin.

Mannicus, however, argues the question instead is whether an angel can touch an angel, since a pin is an angel, as it is like a needle, which has eyes. While we grant that a pin may be a needle, we ask, what do they mean by needle, must a needle have an eye? It is written that a woman may not go out on Shabbat with a needle that is not perforated, meaning that such a thing is still a needle. However, this raises an important question that must be addressed: what day are the angels touching the pin? What if this is a matter of shabbat?

For an angel to reach a needle, the needle must grow relatively closer to the angel, which, as Rav Huygens

teaches, means reaching for it is the same as throwing it. Throwing a needle on Shabbat is prohibited, as it For an angel to reach a needle, the needle must grow relatively closer to the angel, which, as Rav Huygens teaches, means reaching for it is the same as throwing it. Throwing a needle on Shabbat is prohibited, as it is written, *Because the weavers of the tapestries in the Tabernacle throw their needles to each other when they need to borrow the other's needle. Throwing was a labor performed in the Tabernacle; therefore, one is liable for performing it.* However, the Gemara asks: *it clear that they had to throw needles to each other? Perhaps they sat next to each other.* The Gemara answers: *It is clear that they kept their distance from each other. If they sat too close, they would reach each other and hurt one another with their needles.* The Gemara asks: *Perhaps, even though they kept their distance, they sat within four cubits of each other, and they would not throw the needles farther than that.* Thus, we have managed to make great progress on the question: on Shabbat, no angels may fit on the head of the pin. Now, the future authorities examining this question only need to address the remaining six days of the week.

Rav El'ad ben Asher

## GEMS FROM THE OLD COLLEGIAN

St. John's first student newspaper, also called the St. John's Collegian, ran from 1887 to 1976. Here are some finds from February 1895, 129 years ago to the month, which should be of interest to students today:

"The sad drowning accident of Herman T. Wooters, a student at St. John's, while skating in Peterson's Cove, an inlet in College creek, between four and five o'clock, on the afternoon of January 23, cast a deep gloom over his fellow students, as well as those in the city who knew the young man."

"For the first time since it's establishment in 1696, St. John's can boast of a married man amongst her students. This somewhat unusual condition was brought about by the fact that one of the Juniors has taken unto him a wife. From all that can be gathered, it seems that the gentleman in question was married about a year ago, but kept the affair secret until a few days ago, when he boldly announced it... At present, the happy Benedict and his wife are living very happily, and the COLLEGIAN extends to them its congratulations and best wishes.

P.S. Much speculation having arisen as to *why* the student married before he left the college, we beg to offer the following explanation: We are told, on good authority, that the gentleman contemplates 'taking orders' after graduation; in fact he has already begun to 'dig' into the bible. Now, he could not have advanced very far before he came to the passage 'It is not good that a man should be alone.' So we naturally suppose that the gentleman abided by scripture and took unto himself a helpmeet (sic)."

"The second hop of the series occurred on Friday night, Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>, and was a source of pleasure to all who participated in it. The weather was down on us, but this seemed to only increase the zeal of the 'fellows to get the femmes.'"

## BVG MEETING IN ANNAPOLIS

(Cont from page 1.) of the discussion based application in helping meet these goals. "It not only completements our pedagogy perfectly," she said, "but also answers many questions in higher education, like those on AI and discrimination in applications." Approximately 140 people applied using the discussion based application. This year, a high rate of early applications helped improve prospects for enrollment, while a larger number of domestic applicants counteracted the decrease in international applications.

Graduate admission, particularly in the low residency program, is also up on both campuses. Currently, there are 87 Graduate Institute students in Santa Fe, with another 27 in Annapolis.

Retention, also a frequent topic of conversations at the Board Meeting, was also discussed, with members mentioning improved performance this year, with only a 3.9% withdrawal rate this year so far in Santa Fe. However, efforts to improve retentions are still a major focus, given the disproportionately higher withdrawal rate at the College compared to other peer institutions. Efforts to address this include continued support for the Career Development Office, which continues to offer funding through the Hodson and Pathways program, as well as host increasingly high number of events for students in a wide spectrum of fields. Additionally, the Deans of both campuses presented a planned program also called Pathways which will provide more resources for students interested in pursuing the ten most popular career pathways for students.

Facilities were another major focus on for the Board, with approval being given for renovations to Pinkney over the summer after next, and a long needed IT overhaul. The Mayor of Annapolis presented information about the College Creek Connector, although the board did not make a final vote on that path.

El'ad Nichols-Kaufman

## ABOUT THE ST. JOHN'S COLLEGIAN

The St. John's Collegian is the weekly newspaper of St. John's College Annapolis. We work to bring quick and timely coverage of important events going on, to help develop a more informed student body. If you're searching for more in-depth investigations and reporting, as well as essays, art and culture, check out the Gadfly, our affiliated publication, which is published once every three weeks.

Want to submit an article? We always need more writers, whether for opinion or reporting! Submissions for news articles should be between 400-600 words, while opinion should be kept short at 350 words. Just email [eanicholskaufman@sjc.edu](mailto:eanicholskaufman@sjc.edu) with your article, and we will work to get it in print! Longer form articles and more in-depth exploration of ideas should go to the Gadfly, which accepts submissions at [lbriner@sjc.edu](mailto:lbriner@sjc.edu).

Contributors for this issue:

El'ad Nichols-Kaufman, Editor

Tarik Mahmud

Once again, I am making my request for contributors: If you want a paper that reflects your interests, please write on the issues you care most about! Only through this can we continue to make the Collegian the best newspaper possible.

### Aphorism of the Week:

We claim that we have conquered nature. If that is true, why has no one killed themselves by not breathing?

