

## CAUTION: MASCOTS BROUGHT TO CONA MAY NOT RETURN

ASHLEY HATCH, CO ★ STAFF WRITER

For decades mascots have been a symbol of pride for delegations during CONA. Delegations bring mascots as a way of celebrating their state. For instance, Louisiana has an alligator head, while delegates from South Carolina have been seen carrying around a watermelon this week. Sadly, during CONA this year, two mascots were stolen, which seems to be a common theme from CONA sessions through the years.

First, Alabama's mascot, Jerry, an orchid, was stolen. The delegates from whom Jerry was stolen then began receiving notes demanding ransom, in this case, delegation pins. The story gets even more perplexing as the delegates tried to solve the mystery of who kidnapped Jerry. For more on this story, watch Tuesday's Blue Ridge Report on YouTube (<http://bit.ly/2upLw0C>).

Jerry thankfully was reunited with his delegation after his kidnappers left him on top of an air-conditioning duct in Ware Pavillon during the dance.

Wisconsin's cow, Polly, also was kidnapped. The cow has special significance for the delegation, and they

definitely need it for the ride home. They also are offering to give the delegation that returns Polly an inflatable cow for ransom.

Delegates who have had their mascots kidnapped wish for their safe return as they are symbolic to their time at CONA.

Overall, mascots are an important part of the pride that each delegation brings from their state to CONA. ★



**STOLEN MASCOT ★ WISCONSIN'S COW MASCOT WAS STOLEN AND HAS NOT YET BEEN RETURNED**

PHOTO BY GREGG WHITFORD, NM

## PRESIDING OFFICERS OF THE DAY

**JULIA KHAN**

ASHLEY HATCH, CO ★ STAFF WRITER

2017 Presiding Officer Julia Khan started Youth and Government at the middle school level when one day she carpooled with a neighbor to attend a meeting for YAG. During the meeting, Khan felt comfortable and enjoyed that her opinions were taken seriously. The first meeting prompted Khan to continue to come back, and she has now been attending for six years.

Khan offers this advice for delegates: "Every single person at this conference can teach you something important. It's just up to you to go out and learn from them." Khan also has an empowering message

tailored toward young women: "Everything you have to say is valuable, important, and worth being heard, so don't second guess yourself."

Khan wants to share her last experience at CONA by bringing home the unique language spoken on the Mountain and sharing the true compassion that thrives in the conference atmosphere. Khan studies political science and Slavic studies at Barnard College of Columbia University.

In the future, Khan wants to pursue a career in intellectual property law. ★



**CONA'S TEACHERS ★ POS JULIA KHAN AND RAGHAVENDRA PAI**

PHOTO BY KATIE ALSUP, OK

**RAGHAVENDRA PAI**

Raghavendra Pai says his debate team pressured him into Youth and Government. Despite initially seeing it as a waste of time, Oklahoma's State Conference proved to be a life-changing for him and made him realize his ideas were valued.

Pai first had a chance to go to CONA his freshman year, but could not because his family traveled to India. After he declined the offer, Pai made a promise to State Director Stan Barton that he would go to CONA at least once. Sadly, Barton passed away during Pai's sophomore year, but Pai kept his promise and went to CONA at the end of that year.

While Pai loved his first CONA experience, he said it was not perfect. As a great presenter and debater, Pai expected his proposal to go all the way to Plenary, yet it didn't advance past Second Committee. Pai then approached CONA fully open to the experience, achieving his goal to present his proposal in Plenary after his junior year. His senior year, he served as his state delegation leader and ultimately was chosen to serve as a presiding officer.

Pai this year wants to empower the CONA community. He would like to play a part in delegates walking away with the realization they, too, possess potential.

Pai studies chemical engineering at Northwestern University. He aims to get his Ph.D. before working in the renewable energy field making technology for developing nations and helping create policies for that technology. He also wants to open a restaurant called Pai's Pies and aims to one day release several rap singles. ★

# INTERPRETING THE CONSTITUTION: AS IT WAS WRITTEN OR WITH A MODERN TWIST?

**THOMAS DANNENFELSER,**  
 VA ★ STAFF WRITER

In 1789, America's founding principles were set in ink in the form of the Constitution of the United States of America. Yet today, there exists a great divide in the interpretation of the respected document between scholars, Supreme Court justices, and ordinary citizens.

The debate comes down to this: Should the Constitution be interpreted as it was written in 1789 or with a modern twist? There are two trains of thought regarding the issue. One position being the theory of a "living Constitution," the other is originalism.

Living Constitution theory is an outlook on the Constitution that allows the meaning of the provisions to change over time. Professor David A. Strauss of Chicago

Law School defines the Living Constitution theory as one that, "evolves, changes over time and adapts to new circumstances, without being formally amended." President Woodrow Wilson was a prominent supporter of this ideology saying, "The old political formulas do not fit the present problems; they read now like documents taken out of a forgotten age." Wilson argued that elements of the Constitution were outdated and therefore, a modern interpretation should be applied.

Similarly, supporters today say that the framers failed to mention important issues such as women's rights, abortion, and immigration, therefore the Constitution, in their eyes, acts as an anachronism to today's modern issues.

Originalism is the counter to the Living Constitution theory. Ed Whelan is director of a Washington, D.C.-based program called "The Constitution, The Courts, And The Culture." He articulated the basis of originalism, saying, "the meaning of various provisions of the Constitution ... is to be determined in accordance with the meaning they bore at the time they were promulgated." Whelan is critical of the idea of a contemporary interpretation, saying "it's not flexible or adaptable. It entrenches the current preferences of the elites against change."

Originalists hold that their system allows for consistency when interpreting the Constitution.

The late Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia and President Trump's recent Supreme Court appointee, Neil Gorsuch, are two notable originalists.

The divide between originalism and the Living Constitution Theory is largely a split between progressive and conservative values. This partisanship is seen especially in the configuration of the Supreme Court, in which Living Constitution justices have been appointed by progressive presidents; likewise, conservative presidents have traditionally appointed originalist justices. The progressive-minded may see the Constitution as antiquated, insisting that the values of the framers of the Constitution 230 years ago are not in line with the modern reality, while conservatives would say changes can only be made to the Constitution through the amendment process, arguing that the core values of the document are timeless. As one of the most prominent subjects of the modern U.S. era, the debate over Constitutional interpretation is sure to continue. ★



## TIME CAPSULE CAPTURES CONA

**ASHLEY HATCH, CO ★ STAFF WRITER**

Fifty years is a recognizable milestone for any ideology or program. In honor of the 50th anniversary of the Conference on National Affairs, a time capsule is being assembled.

The seniors who just graduated this year (2017) can sign the outside of the capsule, which has been placed in Eureka Hall. Everyone, including staff and advisers, can add a note to the time capsule. Every person here has the opportunity to share their message to someone 25 years from now.

The project leaders hope the time capsule leaves a legacy for CONA's 75th anniversary in 2042. To write a note, come to the designated booth in Eureka Hall. A few suggestions include solutions to current proposals, predictions or advice.

Make sure to join in on the 50th anniversary celebration by adding your story to the time capsule! ★

**A MEMORY ★ KAYLIEGH HAND, AL, WRITES A NOTE TO FUTURE CONA DELEGATES TO BE PUT IN THE TIME CAPSULE.**

PHOTO BY ANNA OLSON, OK

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