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Class Election '97
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reporting on the class officer elections,
focusing mostly on the Class of 1999

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Stevens, McBride tear standard speechmaking rules to bits, deciding to...

LET HER RIP



Above left: "I'm not sure when this script was created, but I assure you, from this day forward, it is no more!" Tim Stevens proclaimed as he ripped up a paper labeled "The Script." Above right: Hoping to outdo Stevens, Ryan McBride said, "I have this speech prepared here..." and ripped it up.

Today's presidential vote likely to be a two-man battle

"I have faith in all of you. I hope, when the time comes, all of you will have faith in me."
—Tim Stevens

In the two contested elections which Tim Stevens has been a part of during his career in school politics, he has won because of an interesting, engaging speech which his opponents simply cannot match.

It looked like that was going to happen again Wednesday. Of the candidates for president of the Class of 1999, Stevens was the first to speak, and he clearly connected with his audience. Once again, his creative speechwriting ability had come through.

But then something happened to Stevens which had never happened before.

Ryan McBride happened.

"I think I'm the leader that this class deserves and needs."
—Ryan McBride

(Continued on page 2)

Presidential speeches turn three-way election into a two-man show

McBride speaks “from the heart” after Stevens rips up “script”

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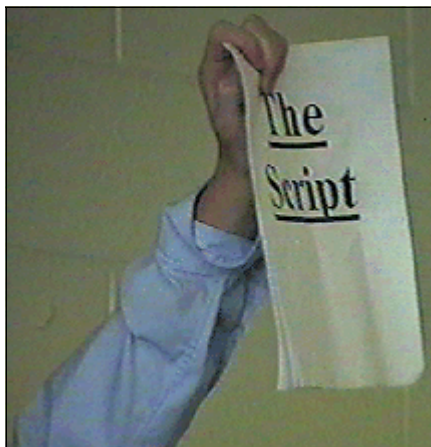
And by the time McBride was done with his speech, it looked like the three-way election between Stevens, McBride, and Jeff Brunetti had turned into a toss-up between Stevens and McBride.

One of the most crucial elements of McBride’s success Wednesday was the speaking order. The candidates for each office gave their speeches in reverse alphabetical order; thus, Stevens spoke first, then McBride, and then Brunetti. As it turned out, the fact that Stevens’s speech came before McBride would change the entire course of the election.

When Stevens was introduced by Student Council Secretary Genna Griffith, he was met with loud cheers and one cry of “Tim for mayor!”

Upon reaching the podium, Stevens greeted his classmates in his typical style: an unorthodox opening sentence. While others said “Hello my name is...” or “Good morning classmates...” to start their speeches, Stevens began with, “This is probably the most public thing you’ve seen me do all year. President is not exactly a glamour job. It consists of a lot of behind-the-scenes work.”

After a few more seconds of introduction, Stevens cut to the heart of his speech. “The first two years of any class’s government follow a set pattern, a script—” At this point, Stevens took out a piece of paper with the words “The Script” typed on it in big letters—“like the one I hold before you. Worry about the proms and fundraisers and everything else is secondary.”



Above: Tim Stevens illustrates his point with a prop, a piece of paper labeled “The Script.” Moments later, Stevens ripped the paper up.

Stevens’s introduction of the “script” prop brought laughter from the suddenly interested audience.

“I’m not sure when this script was created,” he continued, “but I assure you, from this day forward, it is no more.”

At that point,

Stevens ripped the paper labeled “script” in half and let it fall to the floor. The crowd erupted into applause and laughter.

“From now on, the Class of ’99 is controlled by the members of the Class of ’99. *We* are now in charge!” Stevens exclaimed. “From this point on, we control our own destinies. Not fate, or a script developed by tradition. *Us.*”

Stevens went on to say that the election is not about him or the other candidates, but “about all of you, and what is best for you.”

“I cannot stand before you and make promises about what I will do if elected, because I have no right to do that. To do that is to claim that I know what’s best for you and I control what you want. That simply is not true. The only people that control the destiny of this class is all of us as a unit. Our thoughts, our ideas, our concerns. Those are what matter.”

In conclusion to his 90-second speech, Stevens stated, “I am not here to control this class’s destiny. I am here to ensure that this class is heard. I have faith in all of you. I hope, when the time comes, all of you will have faith in me, Timothy Stevens. Thank you very much.”

As Stevens walked away from the podium, the audience erupted once again into wild cheers of approval. It looked like the three-term president had once again topped himself, setting up a tough act for his opponent to follow.

Ryan McBride, who spoke next, knew how tough it would be to match or top Stevens’s popular speech. As

(Continued on page 3)

Stevens wrapped up his remarks, McBride covered his face with one hand in frustration about the prospect of



Above: Ryan McBride (left) reacts to Tim Stevens’s popular speech. Moments later, McBride would be cheered even louder than Stevens.

McBride rises to the challenge

Tops Stevens's speech, but will he win election today?

(Continued from page 2)

having to speak right after Stevens's remarks.

When he was introduced, he was greeted with, like Stevens, the sound of wild cheers and applause, and also with a standing ovation from several of his friends in the front row. McBride walked up to the microphone looking down at his speech, then looked up after a few seconds and stated, "I have this speech prepared..." He then tore the speech in two and, like Stevens had done with the "script," let it fall to the floor.

This drew uproarious laughter from the crowd, led by McBride's personal front-row cheering section.

"What I'm about to tell you is right from my heart," he continued. At this point, virtually the entire cafeteria was laughing, including the other candidates. "I'd like to say 'good morning' to all of you. I'm Ryan McBride, candidate for the sssophomore class."

"I love you! Whoo!" yelled one of McBride's friends.

"I love you too," McBride replied.

"And then, uh..." he paused, then pointed down to the floor toward his ripped speech and said, "I really needed that."

But McBride continued without it. "Let me tell you a little bit about myself," he went on as the laughter and giggling continued. "Been on the Key Club for three years now; active member, like it a lot," he said. For no apparent reason, this statement drew a large round of applause.

McBride continued to be showered with applause and cheers for virtually every sentence he finished.

"I'll honest with you," McBride said after he had fin-



Above: Mark Jankowski, Chris Manzione, and Joe Michalski, all part of McBride's "cheering section," applaud their candidate.

ished with a brief list of his personal qualifications. "Our class is really lacking in the participation department.

We're really not participating as a class."

"I feel that there's a lack of leadership in one of our offices, maybe in all our offices. You know what? I think maybe, I think I'm the leader this class deserves and needs."

The audience's reaction to that comment practically brought the house down.

McBride then discussed last Sunday's class car wash. "Some of you were there, some of you weren't," he said, rolling his eyes pointedly in the direction of opponent Jeff Brunetti, who signed up but then did not make it to the car wash.

"I was there and I had a great time; we raised a lot of money. I think we should do more stuff like that. I only wish there was more of you there to par-tic-i-pate. And that's the key word there. Par-tic-i-pation. How much money are we going to make if nobody's willing to participate?"

Cries of "zero" and "nothing" filled the room. McBride heard Todd Czerwinski's answer to the question and responded with perfect comedic timing, "That's right, Todd. Zero."

"I would welcome any comments from you, the students of the sophomore class, junior class, Class of '99, any way you want to put it—"

Czerwinski then interrupted McBride by inexplicably yelling, "I like girls!"

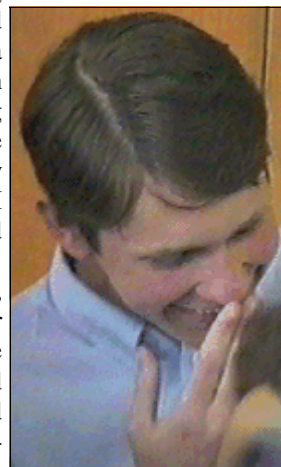
"Todd likes girls. We've established that. We like to see that," McBride responded without missing a beat.

With his speech still sitting on the floor, McBride had some trouble thinking of a way to end his speech, which was more than twice as long as Stevens's at over three minutes. McBride finally said, "So in conclusion, I think we need a leader, and that's me. Thank you."

The applause, laughter, and cheers reached a fever pitch, of course, as McBride concluded his speech and left the microphone. His had clearly been the most popular remarks of the morning.

Jeff Brunetti spoke next, but while McBride had risen to the challenge of matching

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Above: Tim Stevens seemingly can't decide whether to laugh or bury his face in his hands as Ryan McBride delivers a funny, popular speech.

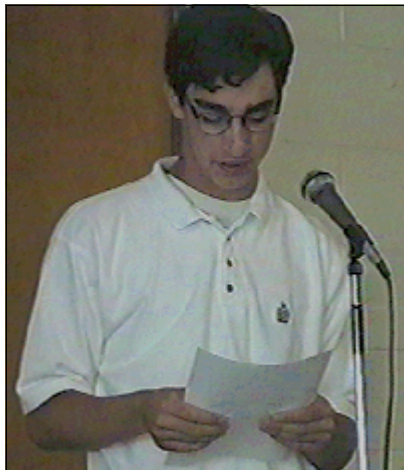
Brunetti: "I don't think I can beat that"

Upstaged by unconventional speeches by Stevens, McBride

(Continued from page 3)

Stevens's speech, Brunetti made no real attempt to match McBride's. He delivered his three-minute speech in the traditional way, simply reading it off of the paper on which it was written with no props or other dramatic devices to back him up.

"I don't think I can beat that," he began, referring to McBride's speech. He then began reading: "Welcome. Today, we hear testimony from candidates, and tomorrow, you will vote. You will ask yourself, 'Who should I vote for?' That is the choice you yourself will have to make.



Above: Jeff Brunetti reads his speech in the conventional way, without ripping anything.

That's what life is about: choices. Sometimes, the choices we make are right. Other times, we are wrong. Many times, the choice that is made requires a change. Please, let me be that change," Brunetti continued.

"My name is Jeff Brunetti. People call me Jeff Brunetti. That's a funny thing, actually," Brunetti stated in a Forrest Gump-like tone.

Taking a phrase right out of President Bill Clinton's campaign, Brunetti referred to the Class of 1999 as "the bridge to the twenty-first century." He said it's time to "get serious" because next year is "probably the most important schoolyear of our lives."

"My goal in office is to get our class more involved in school and community. Seems to me, we are lazy. Where is our school spirit?"

Brunetti appealed to students to get more involved in the class. He also said that if elected, he would try to keep the students of the class better informed.

Brunetti next stated that he has "heard many times that the activities that we do are boring. My answer for this is for you people to stop complaining and give some suggestions to the officers."

Additionally, Brunetti revealed his plan for a radical change in the way the student government works: "If elected, I say all major issues brought up in the meeting

should be voted upon by the entire class. This way, the government is more democratic. Yes. Instead of just officers getting to decide what we do, people in our class would actually vote on what we do. This way, no one should have any complaints." In fact, it isn't just officers who vote now; it's class representatives elected by each homeroom who do the voting. However, Brunetti's plan would nevertheless be a major change to the way the class government works.

"I mean what I say and say what I mean. Class of '99, it's time. Change it up, step it up, and don't slack off. Let's roll full-steam ahead into our junior year. And I leave you with my last promise: I will not let you down. Make the right choice. Make the Jeff Brunetti choice for president."

Brunetti received some cheers and applause for his speech, but moments after he had finished, a chant of "Ryan! Ryan!" began for McBride.

A few minutes later, when the assembly ended, McBride was carried out of the cafeteria on the shoulders of some of his friends from his "cheering section."

Asked how he felt about his speech, McBride replied, "Pretty damn stupid." He explained that he "did all that work, and then I tore it up."



Above: Ryan McBride's fans triumphantly carry him out of the cafeteria on their shoulders after his wildly popular speech.

"Tim had to tear up something," McBride said, and he refused to be upstaged.

As students talked about the elections later in the day and discussed who they plan to vote for and who they expect to win, most of their attention was focused on Stevens and McBride, not Brunetti.

"Prediction: McBride in a sweep," stated Chris Manzione. "This kid had the best speech I've ever

(Continued on page 5)

Students react to wild speeches

Reactions split between supporters of McBride, Stevens

(Continued from page 4)

heard. He's the only kid I know who could top Tim Stevens."

"That was the best speech I've ever seen in my life. It was the funniest one. I'll vote for him," said Akash Patel, who said he had originally planned to vote for Stevens but had now changed his mind.

Liz Rubasky stated that the speeches were "pretty interesting." Asked who she'll vote for, Rubasky said, "I'm definitely a Tim Stevens kind of girl."

Brian Newbold complimented McBride on his speech but said, "I'm going to have to go with Jeff Brunetti. It's a thing I feel I have to do."

"They were pretty good," Sandy Rodrigues said of all the speeches. "Ryan did a pretty good job, considering he didn't have any papers in front of him to read off of." Rodrigues said she will probably vote for Stevens.

"It was very interesting. I thought Tim did a very good job, and he was very creative about it, and you can tell he's really dedicated to his job. And Ryan was just really entertaining," said Lauren Correll, a candidate for vice president who also gave a speech Wednesday.

"I can see the presidents' speeches were effective, the way they ripped up the papers," said Correll's opponent, incumbent Joanna Kornafel. As for McBride's ad-lib speech, "I don't really know if it shows what he can do for the class, because he just did it because Tim ripped up the script."

"I thought it was very hilarious," Matt Thomsen said of McBride's speech. But, he said, "Honestly, I think I'm voting for Jeff Brunetti. I already told him that I would, and I think he would be the best candidate for the job."

"I will be stuffing the ballot box for Ryan McBride," said Jason Martin. "A little bit of immaturity to mix things up would be a great idea for our class."

"Ryan makes all this responsibility stuff fun," Martin added. "I want to go wash a car right now!"

"I think that Ryan McBride's speech was funny, but I still think you have to vote for the person who's most qualified, and although I'm not saying that Ryan's not qualified [or that] he wouldn't make a good president, I think Tim Stevens would make a much better president," said Bryan Rudolph. "I also think that most people are just going to vote for Ryan's speech because it was funny, regardless of anything else, which is wrong."

"I liked Ryan McBride's speech," said Eileen Banach, "but I don't think he'd do as good a job as Tim, because

"Ryan makes all this responsibility stuff fun.

I want to go wash a car right now!"

—Jason Martin

"I think Ryan McBride makes a better stand-up comic than a president."

—Carrie Ripley

I think Tim's a lot more conscientious, and he'd try harder and do more work, so I'll probably end up voting for Tim."

"Brunetti had real good points, and Tim has the experience, and Ryan has the sense of humor, so I don't know," said Kelly Haynes.

"Tim's was good. He's going to win," said Chris Whitaker. As for McBride? "It was funny, but I don't think he's going to win."

"I thought [the speeches] were very entertaining," said Dan Seremet. Asked whose speech he liked better, Seremet

stated, "Ryan McBride is a very good public speaker; I'll give him that. But I think Tim has a better stand on the issues."

Eva Chludzinski stated that McBride took the election as too much of a joke. "He wasn't serious at all. He just got up there to show off and be a comedian," she said.

"I think he was really funny and really cute," Margaret Majewski said of McBride.

Claudio Gualtieri, Brunetti's campaign manager, predicted that Stevens will defeat McBride by three percentage points. "The greatest ally Tim has is Jeff Brunetti," Gualtieri said, suggesting that Brunetti will play spoiler, taking away support from McBride and thus helping Stevens.

As for Brunetti, "He did a good speech, but compared to the excellence of the other two, it seemed to lack a little bit of something." Still, Gualtieri said he would stand by his candidate; he plans to vote for Brunetti.

"I think Ryan McBride makes a better stand-up comic than a president," said Carrie Ripley, who added that she will "most definitely" vote for Stevens.

Stevens himself was not hopeful about the outcome of today's election. When asked yesterday how he felt about the way the speeches went, Stevens stated, "I thought I did a very good job with my speech, but I don't think it will be enough. I think Ryan has pulled off a victory in this case."

"A lot of people have said they're voting for me, but I don't know. It's just the way it seemed; it seemed like a lot more people were interested in his speech than mine."

Asked how he felt, Stevens responded pessimistically, "I just want to enjoy my last day as a president."

When asked to assess his chances, McBride responded, "Do I think I'm going to win? I don't know. Maybe."