

## DECISION 2006



AUSTIN CONTI • LISA THOMAS • DAN DAVIDSON

On April 4, 2006, the 128 members of the Class of 2007 selected the three juniors on the left as candidates for the upcoming Student Government Election. This week, the intensity heightens as the candidates face off to see who will become next year's Student Body President.

Full Story on Pages 2-3

### My Time On the Job: The Ups and Downs of Being In Charge

By BRIAN COMBIAS (VI)

When I was asked to write this article for the upcoming election, I really didn't know where to start. For me, this year on Student Government has been filled with tons of memorable experiences but also a ton of responsibility.

I commend each of the finalists for Student Body President not only for making it this far, but also for their continuous support in making this school a better place. Each of the candidates can easily fill my shoes and I am sure that next year's Student Body President will continue to make great things happen for Pingry.

My experience as Student Body President is one that I will carry with me to college, the real world, and beyond. To make the leap from a Class Representative to Student Body President is a large one; I was no longer the kid who sat silently at meetings, but rather a person who tried to really make things happen. One of the main reasons I have enjoyed being a Representative for

my class and the President of the school is that I get to work with great people. At meetings, it didn't matter whether someone was a freshman or senior; everyone brought intelligent, creative ideas to the table every week.

What strikes me the most about Student Government and my role as president is that we really can make a difference. If you take one quick moment out of your day to really listen to conversations in the hallways, many of those conversations are about what different people prefer about Pingry. This opportunity gave me a chance to help make some of those ideas into reality.

I know that by working in Student Government, I will reap the benefits later in life.

When I was a little kid, my parents continuously told me that if I wanted something badly, I had to go and get it; I couldn't just expect it to fall right into my lap. Until the end of junior year, I didn't really have to work very hard. I had a few responsibilities, including school work, athletics, and

household chores. This year, however, was different. Our success this year with Student Government came from hard work, of which each representative should be proud.

Being Student Body President, you are, by definition, in the spotlight. This isn't always a great thing, because you don't always want to worry about how your every move will be viewed by everyone. However, being in the spotlight and watching our every move pushes us to our potential and makes us better people. Lisa Thomas, Austin Conti, and Dan Davidson are all great people, and I wish them all luck this week.

### Student Government Advisors Reflect Back and Think Forward

By DARINA SHTRAKHMAN (IV)

Mr. Anthony Bowes, the faculty advisor to Student Government, said that Student Government has made "tremendous progress" this year in terms of achieving goals and planning for next year.

Accomplishments include the bill passed on parking and senior privileges, the planning of Homecoming, Winterfest, and Spring Fling, and the initiation of Pingry Podcasting, spearheaded by Zara Mannan (III). The podcasting, said Mr. Bowes, "will hopefully lead to a sort of radio station where kids will eventually be able to listen to announcements as they drive to school."

Plans for next year include working on a bill that would

allow wearing shorts at the beginning of the year as well as a bill that would reinvent the Pingry recycling program.

Bowes said that a Student Body President "needs to have the willpower to accomplish or juggle a lot of simultaneous tasks and do the work that Student Government talks about."

Basically, Mr. Bowes said that he or she needs to "translate ideas into action." This includes doing anything from "making appointments with Mrs. Stockhoff, to meeting with the Headmaster, to actually getting out markers and making posters for Spring Fling."

He added that the Student Body President needs to "be optimistic, believe in the

power of the student body, and believe that Pingry can continue improving based on our past success."

Ms. Ananya Chatterji, the former faculty Student Government advisor, echoed the same necessary traits. "Anyone in the school could be the Student Body President, but the person elected should be someone who wants, truly, to be involved in everything that Pingry offers—clubs, sports, theater, visual arts, music, publications—basically everything. The ideal candidate should be someone who attends all events because he or she wants to be there, supporting and encouraging classmates he or she knows and doesn't know. The ideal candidate should be inherently approachable; everyone should feel comfortable talking with the president. But most importantly, in my opinion, the president should love all aspects of Pingry and want to encourage the student body to be involved in every activity, not just a select few."

Mr. Bowes also mentioned that all three of this year's Student Body President candidates are strong leaders "in that they're drivers of ideas. They all work for a solution rather than simply identifying problems."

In terms of what he would hope to accomplish next year, Mr. Bowes said, "I would like Student Government to think outside the box of just 'student' benefits and more about harnessing the power of the collective Pingry community to do good within the school and outside of Pingry; I think all three candidates understand that."

### Inside The Record

#### In Their Own Words

Presidential candidates Lisa Thomas, Austin Conti, and Dan Davidson write about their contributions to Pingry and their campaign platforms. P. 2-3.

#### A Perfect Pingry?

Students from different forms talk about their Pingry experiences and what the Student Body President should do to improve it. P. 4

#### Passing Down the Wisdom

Senior Class President Adam Goldstein advises next year's Student Government on hot-button issues, from unfair grades to untucked shirts. P. 2

#### If I'd Made the Cut...

The three juniors who were not selected by their classmates in the primary to run for Student Body President share what they would have stood for during the campaign. P. 2



BY MATT LAUD (V)



## If I Had Not Lost the Junior Primary Election...

We asked the three primary candidates who didn't make it what they would have pushed for if elected Student Body President.



**JOSHUA FREEDMAN**

*"I would have transformed the position of Student Body President into that of a meaningless figurehead. Also, I would have made exorbitant false promises and given out bags and bags of free candy."*



**JULIAN QUINTANILLA**

*"I would have worked more closely with the administration and made the Student Government more visible. Additionally, I would have given the students a louder voice and found myself a prom date."*



**SAMUEL WATERBURY**

*"Don't give me that 'if I hadn't lost' business. This isn't over. I'm still running. That's right. Waterbury '06. Write me in and I'll put an end to these foolish morning meetings. I mean really, what's the point?"*

## Advice to Next Year's Student Government

Surprise! Student Government is an organization with limited power. It can't raise a militia, levy taxes, or do any of the other things that normal governments do. In fact, Student Government has no real sovereignty at all; even if it decides on a plan for something as simple as Spring Fling, the administration is still entirely within its rights to override the decision.

So given its limited power, what *can* Student Government do? More than anything else, it can be a source of ideas. And that is where next year's Student Government can truly bypass the Student Governments of the past: by discussing the most pressing issues facing the school and proposing broad ideas to fix them.

This is a risky path, of course, since Student Government can easily be sidetracked into discussions about things that seem important—dress down days, SAC assemblies, and the like—without ever tackling the issues that truly matter.

So to help out next year's new members, here are a few of the most pressing issues to jump-start next year's Student Government:

### TRANSPARENCY

Most students have very little idea of what the school is doing with midterms, the new Middle School, or other big issues facing the school. Student Government should make it as easy as possible

### By Adam Goldstein (VI)

**SENIOR CLASS PRESIDENT** for the administration to keep students up to date—by, for example, proposing that a non-voting student delegate be present at all but the most confidential administration meetings, just to take notes and pass them on.

### ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

For years, the school had a comprehensive recycling program that disposed of paper, bottles, and other recyclables appropriately. Now, according to reports from teachers and students who have been at school after hours, recyclables are sometimes tossed in the same bins containing other trash. Student Government should come up with a reasonable plan for fixing the problem—and bring it, fully developed, to the administration, so all that's left is the implementation.

### DISCIPLINARY JUSTICE

Quick: does a student with an untucked shirt deserve a warning, a detention, or nothing at all? Nobody seems to know. Rather than propose a repeal of the dress code (impossible) or a laundry list of specific punishments (unnecessary), Student Government should propose codifying a general principle: if a rule isn't enforced uniformly, it should be subject to reconsideration from the ground up. Because

chances are, if a rule isn't enforced uniformly, it isn't that important to begin with.

### GRADING POLICY

As all students know, grades can differ substantially from one teacher to another—even among teachers of the same subject. Student Government should propose simple guidelines to fix the current grading system, so that one teacher's "B+" is no longer another teacher's "C+."

### PATERNALISM

With the reinstatement of a Web filter, the administration essentially said, "We know the costs and benefits of visiting certain websites better than the students do." The flaws in this line of thinking must be pointed out as often as possible—and Student Government is in the best position to do just that. Since Pingry has no constitutional court, Student Government must be especially vigilant when students' privacy and freedom are threatened, and should pass unanimous resolutions—however futile they seem—on issues for which there is a broad student consensus.

With big issues like these on the table, next year's Student Government has the potential to make itself great. With enough push behind the issues it cares about, Student Government can truly surprise everyone.



## The Pingry Record

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# Austin Natale Conti

## IN HIS OWN WORDS...

Politics. The word can bring about mixed emotions and images to any individual. Images like a scandal, a liar, or a red power tie. As a matter of fact, I just had a conversation about the nature of politics in my History of Philosophy class. I admit, I was a little bored in the beginning, but it slowly drew my attention. We were talking about Aristotle's "Nicomachean Ethics," in which he says that "the science that studies the supreme good for man is politics."

My first thought upon hearing this was "Wow, deep stuff, but it doesn't make sense." Could it be that all of the scandals we hear about today might represent the study of supreme good? As the class went on, we learned that Aristotle believes that organization and order is the goal of politics, and I thought that the key element to keeping all of this together is communication. If we take away all of the corruption, we are left at an attempt to communicate effectively. That is what politics is for me, a venue for communication.

As your president, I will be your most effective venue to talk about your needs as a student body. Having the most successful proposals, and dances, means knowing what you as a student body wants, and then working hard to achieve it. I won't stop at just communicating your needs, but will formulate a

plan of how to achieve those needs in the most efficient way.

I would like to speak about some of my strengths and how they will play a role in my presidential candidacy. Three simple but vital strengths that will make me a good president are that I am organized, hardworking, and creative.

Being organized will help with approaching your needs efficiently and freeing up more time for me to work for you. Because I am hardworking, if someone comes to me with an idea or proposal, I will be able to work it through to a finished product. Finally, creativity will help me help you in finding a way to make the school a more enjoyable and stress free place to be in.

The following is a history of some of my student government experiences. Student government is broken into two sections; I am part of the Current Issues Committee, which deals with school policy being changed. (The other section is C.O.A.S.T which deals with policy, but focuses more on school events.) I have worked on a proposal concerning dress down days during our final and midterm exams. That week is loaded with enough pressure, and I would personally like to wake up, and just put on some sweats to take my test. I have met with Mr. Conard, and this proposal is



in the works.

Proposal ideas come up, but not in the amount that I think they should. This goes back to communication between the Student Government and the student body. We should have time during our Monday or Tuesday assemblies to give an update on what we are working, and get feedback from you. After all, our job is really to represent what you want as a student body, and the more feedback we get, the better we are. Why should proposals be limited to just student government? If a student wants something changed, he should have the opportunity to present that idea in a time reserved in a Monday or Tuesday meeting.

Also, one non student government representative should come to the student government meetings just to see what is going on. All these ideas are based on my main platform of communication, with the goal of making the Pingry atmosphere the best it can be. If you have any questions please come up to me in the hallway, and I would be thrilled to have a conversation with you.

The reason that I am running for this position is because I really want to work for you and for the school. To have the opportunity to be your president is something I value deeply and consider a privilege. I hope will give me your utmost consideration when you vote.

## CANDIDATE SURVEY

### FAVORITE...

**Movie:** "Braveheart"

**Album/Artist:** Jack Johnson and the Buttdowns

**Subject:** History

**March Madness Team:** George Mason. I have to love the underdogs.

**State:** Happiness

**Insect:** Ladybug

**Comedian:** Peter Griffin and Quagmire

**Place to Shop:** Wherever Mr. Hata buys his suits.

**Teacher:** To be politically correct, I love all my teachers.

**Word:** I have a couple of favorite words, Mango, Booyachasha. Giggity, Giggity, Giggity.

### PICK ONE

**Boxers or Briefs?** Boxer Briefs—they are the new blend of goodness. Just enough support, but not restricting, overall very comfortable

**Food or Water?** Food, I love food.

**Pool or Hot Tub?** Depends on what the occasion is...

**Mary Kate or Ashley?** Just as long as they're twins, I'm happy.

**Jenna or Barbara Bush?** Mmm. Twins.

**Hillary or Bill Clinton?** TWINS! Just kidding.

**Bloods or Crips?** I am not at liberty to discuss my present affiliations.

### COMPLETE THE SENTENCE

**If I were a Harry Potter character, I'd be...** Hermione, not only is she smart, but she is good looking.

**If I were an ice cream flavor, I'd be...** Rum raisin... I love raisins.

**The most embarrassing CD I own is...** Tally Hall, just kidding I like them. I like some weird classic stuff like Bobby Darin. I saw the movie "Somewhere Beyond the Sea" with my grandparents, and then I bought the CD.

# Daniel Cady Davidson

## IN HIS OWN WORDS...

Ah, Student Body President Elections, the one time of the year when students are united in their desire to learn about the candidates and their beliefs, to take a balanced look at how these ideas compare with their own ideologies, and then to vote for whomever has the funniest speech and gives them the most candy. I can't promise a funny speech (although I'll try my best), but I can promise to give you so much candy you'll be sweating high-fructose corn syrup. Oh, and I can also promise to work really hard for you if you vote for me. That, too.

If I could have one wish, I wouldn't wish to be the Student Body President. I would wish to have three more wishes. Then of those three wishes, the first would be to have three *more* wishes. The second would be to have the ability to play the guitar solo from "Heartbreaker", and the third would be to get elected Student Body President.

In actuality, there's nothing that would make me happier than being elected to lead our student body. Over the four years that I have served as Class President, I have worked hard in order to make school life more enjoyable for my peers, and I'd like to continue this hard work as an emissary of the entire school. Also, I could start referring to myself as 'el presidente' and finally get some street cred around this place.

This is all fine and well, you say, but what measly, pathetic ideas have you managed to scrounge up in that pea-sized

brain of yours that will convince the student body to vote for you? Allow me to briefly sum up what I would attempt to accomplish if I were elected Student Body President.

A key part of my agenda is to get students outside of Student Government more involved in the process. I want greater accountability for Class Representatives, ensuring that the group works hard all year for the student body.

One way to achieve this goal is to create Student Government-run committees to plan school events, which any member of the student body can then join. In the past, all key decisions regarding Homecoming, Winterfest and Spring Fling have been made by Student Government members. I would like to see Student Government continue to be responsible for making these events happen, but with increased creative input from the student body.

I would also like to see new amenities for students, including new couches and vending machines in more locations. To keep the student body updated on Student Government's progress in this, and other areas, I will make regular announcements recapping current successes and failures. I also am intent on continuing to foster the increased school spirit demonstrated this year, and the success of the S.A.C.

Not only do I believe that I'm in possession of ideas that can make a positive impact on the school, I feel that I will be



able to carry them out swiftly. I've had more experience than most in dealing with administration members, mostly due to my tremendous amount of egregious Honor Code violations, including, but not limited to, parking across two handicap spots, an unfortunate hazing incident involving Patrick Trousdale (IV), and being in possession of three school projectors (the other stuff though, I swear that wasn't me).

In addition to these unpleasanties, however, I have also engaged in many, shall we say, pleasanties, with members of the administration. From a Student Government perspective, I feel it is important to have a president who is able to communicate well with the administration, and I think I have the best qualifica-

tions to perform this task.

In addition, my highly approachable nature makes me a splendid go-between for intercourse (of the non-sexual variety) between the student body and the administration. Have a problem? Come up to me in the hall and complain about it. Not for too long though, no one wants to hear you complain. There's no need to feel intimidated by my stature and raw upper body strength. Despite my appearance, I am very timid.

Allow me to conclude by saying this—you may not realize it, but the Student Body President can have a very large impact on the school. If you want a leader who is dedicated to making Pingry a better place for all of us, vote Dan Davidson for Student Body President.

## CANDIDATE SURVEY

### FAVORITE...

**Movie:** "The Big Lebowski"

**Album/Artist:** Led Zeppelin II or NOW! That's What I Call Xmas Volume II

**Subject:** History

**March Madness Team:** Wichita State Shockers

**State:** Delaware. There's probably more to do there than we think. I'm not sure though, I've never been there.

**Insect:** Pepsis wasp—they kill tarantulas

**Comedian:** Josh Freedman (V)

**Place to Shop:** www.penisland.net... Pen Island has a fabulous selection of writing utensils

**Teacher:** This question is obviously designed to get us in trouble.

**Word:** 'kudos'

### PICK ONE

**Boxers or Briefs?** Freeballin'

**Hillary or Bill Clinton?** Bill in public - Hillary in private.

**Food or Water?** Water. If I need food, I can always photosynthesize.

**Pool or Hot Tub?** Any pool I enter instantly becomes a hot tub.

**Jenna or Barbara Bush?** Barbara. She's the hot one, right?

**Mary Kate or Ashley?** The one that played Michelle in "Full House."

**Bloods or Crips?** I plead da' fif'.

### COMPLETE THE SENTENCE

**If I were a Harry Potter character, I'd be...** Harry. I've always wanted better seeking skills and a badass scar.

**If I were an ice cream flavor, I'd be...** Cherry Garcia

**The most embarrassing CD I own is...** Big Willie Style. And by embarrassing I mean awesome.

# Lisa Nicole Thomas

## IN HER OWN WORDS...

When I first got the email from the editors of the Record telling me that I had to write an essay for the paper about why I wanted to run for Student Body President, I had no idea what to write. I mean, I had a ton of work to do (like everyone does at this time of the year) and I didn't think I would have the time to write something deep and meaningful and moving—something that would make everyone want to vote for me.

When I finally sat down to write, I started thinking, thinking about past elections, past Student Body Presidents, and what it was that made me vote for certain candidates. During all of this thinking, I decided that the best way to go about this was to tell all of you who I am and what I stand for, so that when you vote, you will know who it is you are truly voting for.

I was born on September 27<sup>th</sup>, 1988. I live with my mom and my younger brother, Grant, who is a freshman at Pingry. I like long-stem tulips, writing short stories, driving around with my music blasting and taking long naps. I've been a student here since the third grade and this school has become a huge part of my life.

I spend most of my time here — whether it's going to school, doing the fall play, or working at the day-camp held here during the summer — and for the most part, I don't mind spending all that

time here. For me, Pingry is a second home, a safe place where I can learn and grow. All my friends are here and I honestly can't imagine going to any other school but Pingry.

I love everything that this place stands for—academic excellence and ethical behavior intertwined with a strong sense of community. It's because I care about this place so much that I want to be Student Body President.

I feel that the job of Student Body President is to keep up the traditions of Pingry while integrating fresh new ideas. I want to keep up and increase school spirit.

One way would be to hold raffles at games, plays, and concerts for cool stuff. I feel that school spirit is extremely important, especially in an environment where we are always being pushed to do our best. It's more fun and exciting to score a goal or hit a high note if your friends are in the stands or audience watching. I want everyone to be there for one another, and I'm going to do everything I can to make school spirit an issue in our school.

Another topic that must be a constant priority is communication between the administration and the student body. To me, part of the Student Body President's job is to facilitate an ongoing dialogue between the heads of the school and the students. I don't believe that the deci-



sions that affect us should be made without any of our input. I would insist on weekly meetings with both the Head of the Upper School and the Dean of the Upper School and would try to make it a requirement that at least one Student Government Representative attend the administrative meetings to take notes and/or give his/her input on what's going on in the school.

We should take as much of our education into our own hands as possible.

These are my two main campaign platforms. I would also like to try and work to get a Senior Lounge somewhere in the school again. (There should be space available once the new Middle School Building is complete.)

I know that it may not seem like I have a lot to give you or that I have a clear plan for what I want to do as Student Body President. In all honesty, I don't know exactly what I would do with that office. I just know that if you trust me, I won't let you down. I have the skills, integrity, compassion, motivation, honesty, kindness, openness, and a sense of responsibility that any good leader should possess. I want to be the person that you, the students, can come to with any problems that you may have or any ideas that you have to make Pingry better. I can and want to do this job and if you let me, I know I can lead us to an exciting and richer Pingry experience.

## CANDIDATE SURVEY

### FAVORITE...

**Movie:** "The Little Mermaid." You can't go wrong by watching this movie. Arielle is hot, Eric is sexy and Sebastian adds just the right amount of flava'.

**Album:** Right now my favorite album is 3 6 Mafia's "Most Known Unknowns" cause it's what's poppin' in the streets.

**Subject:** A.P. U.S. History

**March Madness Team:** George Mason, even though they lost.

**State:** Florida—it's really nice and sunny and warm and I just love it there.

**Insect:** Butterfly

**Comedian:** Dave Chappelle

**Place to Shop:** My aunt's basement. She always has cool, weird stuff down there that I can just take.

**Teacher:** Dr. Murray

**Word:** Nefarious

### PICK ONE

**Hillary or Bill Clinton?** Hillary Clinton

**Food or Water?** Food

**Pool or Hot Tub?** Hot Tub

**Jenna or Barbara Bush?** Neither

**Mary Kate or Ashley?** Mary Kate

**Bloods or Crips?** Crips

### COMPLETE THE SENTENCE

**If I were a Harry Potter character, I'd be...** Hermione Granger.

**If I were an ice cream flavor, I'd be...** Ben and Jerry's "Phish Food" because I am just a mix of yummy goodness

**The most embarrassing CD I own is...** The Vengaboyz



## What Do You Look For in a Student Body President?



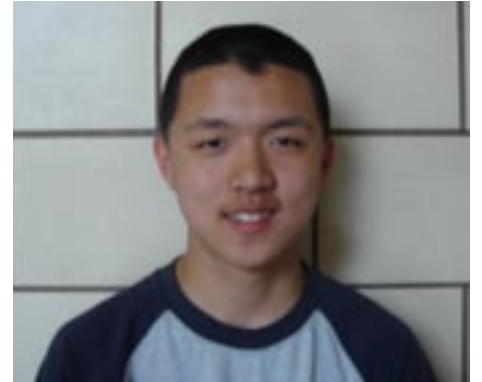
**OLIVIA DELIA (IV)**

*"I would love to have a girl lead the school."*



**JAMES WHITE (III)**

*"Austin Conti."*



**BRIAN ZHOU (II)**

*"Someone who is outspoken and knows everyone."*



**CARL RUGGIERO (VI)**

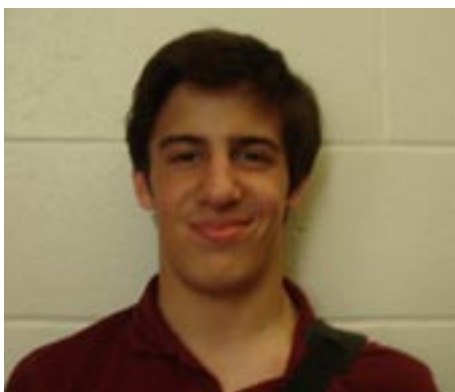
*"What election?"*



**MARISSA BIALECKI (VI)**

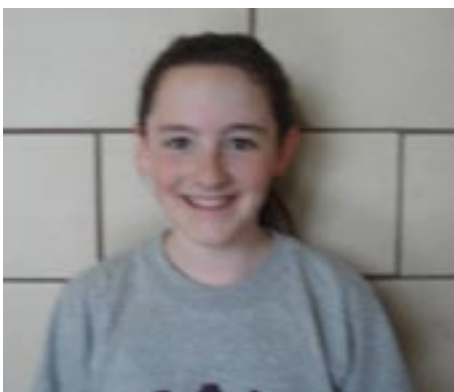
*"A sexy body and brains."*

## If You Could Change One Thing About Our School, What Would It Be?



**RICKY ZACHARIAS (IV)**

*"We need a more obviously active Student Government."*



**JULIA DOWLING (I)**

*"Seventh grade CP should not be proctored."*



**ELIZABETH YOUNGDAHL (V)**

*"The social activities should be more fun."*



**EVAN TOWT (V)**

*"I want the Record staff to stop harassing me."*



**ZARA MANNAN (III)**

*"School events need to be better planned and attended."*