

# This Clown Wants To Be Hartford's Next Mayor

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DAVID TABATSKY

COURANT PHOTO BY STEPHEN DUNN

With a sweep of his arm and the toss of three flaming torches, Hartford's newest mayoral candidate, David Tabatsky, threw his hat into the ring Wednesday.

The ring was made of yellow plastic and the hat was floppy and well-pummed.

He walked a "political tightrope" by stepping out on a rope suspended between two step ladders and juggling three lighted torches while standing on one foot.

Tabatsky, his fluffy hair extending to his shoulders, wore a wild polka-dot shirt and large pleated pants flowed outward from his small frame.

His attire and campaign style fit his slogan.

"Put a real clown

in office," the 27-year-old comedian told a group of friends and reporters as he strutted amid the Gold Street boulders known as the Stone Field Sculpture.

Tabatsky's antics kicked off his campaign for mayor on the "Party Party" ticket, but like many political pioneers, Tabatsky has suffered a setback at the hands of the establishment.

He had attempted to gather the 216 voters' signatures he needed to appear on the November ballot, but the city clerk certified the validity of only 200 of the 235 he handed in.

Undaunted, Tabatsky said he planned something more than just a write-in campaign to keep his mayoral hopes alive. During the next two months, he said, he will be handing out stickers bearing his name that voters can press onto the write-in space on the ballot.

Tabatsky said he would demand to be taken seriously if elected mayor, railing against City Council members who have failed to appear at council meetings called by the mayor.



COURANT PHOTO BY STEPHEN DUNN

David Tabatsky walks a "political tightrope" while juggling three lighted torches to launch his campaign for mayor.

Tabatsky said a campaign for mayor was a natural for him. The reason, he said, is that "I've always been Mayer Tabatsky. My Hebrew name is Mayer."

He plans to spice up what he calls "the dreary, dismal" Hartford political scene.

One of his first ideas for the mayoral race will be a 100-yard dash by the candidates down Main Street and up the steps of City Hall to the mayor's office.

"Whoever touches the mayor sign first wins," he said with glee. "May the best clown win."

Council members who fail to appear and do not notify the mayor should be fined, he said, and, "If they get rude . . . they should be spanked."

Tabatsky used blocks of wood to present a nine-plank political platform. "Wood is durable," he said. "People can sling mud on this platform and it will hold up under all kinds of duress."

The first plank was, simply, "health." He explained, "There are sick people here in this city and I'd like to change that."

He also supported "art," because "art is healthy;" "kids," because "most politicians forget the kids." Another plank called for "corporate humility."

Plank number five is "tax deferrals for everybody." The city's practice of giving tax deferrals to developers and homeowners making improvements has come under fire.

"Or maybe not," said plank six.

Tabatsky explained his ambivalence with a shrug. "I'd like to leave it loose so I can please all constituencies," he said.

Plank seven is "housing," eight is "optional" and nine is "communication."

An apparent advocate of social change, Tabatsky also proposed that "people in the upper class and people in the lower class should switch places every year." With a sly smile, he declined to elaborate on that proposal.

His lofty ideals are balanced by another side of his personality.

His campaign needs financial support, he pointed out. "I'll be accepting cash, checks or Master Charge. You can leave your card with me for a week," he suggested.

He also had some ideas on city financial operations, suggesting, "Remove the city parking meters and install video games instead." He came up with this idea after receiving a recent parking ticket for "not having enough dimes."

Rambling on, he said he plans to fulfill a candidate's obligations to the public's right to know. "I plan to reveal my assets to The Hartford Courant," he said glancing down bashfully. "I hope they print it."

One of Hartford's few professional comic performers, Tabatsky has been making a name for himself locally by hosting comedy nights and performing in schools. He teaches with Theatre Unlimited of Hartford and performs occasionally for the Protean Theater on Pratt Street.

## Candidate Offers Election Pratfalls

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