

Electoral Politics in Maine

(Draft Version: Subject to Subsequent Revision)

The last forty years have witnessed great and significant changes in Maine politics. Although some have been minor, others have been profound. Yet amid all the changes, there have been several patterns and archetypes which have endured.

I have tried to capture a good deal of the flavor and consequences of these changing campaign patterns in This Splendid Game: Maine Politics from 1940 to 2002. (1) In this chapter, however, I shall underscore the most enduring trends discernable since 1960: (a) the rise of campaign costs and professionalism of politics in Maine, (b) the enduring archetype of the moderate, independent national senatorial model, (c) the rise of the Franco American voter, (d) the increasing importance of the ballot measure and its concomitant democratization of the political process and (e) the increasingly discernable importance of psychographics in Maine politics.

I shall conclude with some observations concerning the many positives which continue to be present in both the process and style of Maine politics.

A. A Time of Rising Costs and Professionalism

One of the overarching themes of the last 40 years in Maine politics has been twin patterns of rising costs and increasing professionalism in Maine elections have led to a competitive

balance which was not present in the earlier eras of Maine political history.

A brief overview of Maine politics since World War II, for example, shows that when it comes to the elections for governor, Congress and the US Senate, the Republican domination of the 1940's and early 1950's soon gave way to Democratic ascendancy from the mid-1950's until the early 1970's as the Muskie revolution of 1954 propelled the latter party from obscurity to center stage.

In fact, so strong was the Democratic momentum that in 1972, had not Bill Cohen won the 2nd CD seat for Congress, the Democrats would have controlled both senate seats, both congressional seats and the governorship.

In its turn, the Cohen counter-revolution helped to restore balance to the political scene and the last twenty years has been characterized by Republican, Democratic, and Independent successes with the Green Party also adding an important dimension to the mix in several important elections.

Just as Muskie had built up the Democratic party and attracted a variety of strong candidates, Cohen's style and campaign tactics attracted a number of young, energetic and moderate Republicans office seekers. The result was a highly competitive political system.

In fact, at century's end, the Congressional delegation was balanced with two Democratic Congressmen (Tom Allen and John Baldacci) and two Republican Senators (Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins) as well as an Independent governor (Angus King).

This end of century balance was also reflected in the ongoing voting patterns. Although there were more unenrolled or

Independent voters (38%) than Republicans (29%) or Democrats (33%); because Independents were less likely to vote than their enrolled counterparts, the electorate could be thought of as basically in a 1/3,1/3,1/3 balance. This means that as a practical matter today, any candidate from any party or non-party must garner substantial support from parties other than his or her own in order to be successful.

That is why successful major party candidates in general elections in Maine almost always are nominees who are not from the far left (if Democrat) or far right (if Republican) of their respective parties. For Maine, over the last forty years, “the center holds.” This is very much in the Maine historical tradition.

Yet other political forces can be seen to have an impact as well. For example, although it has only 1-2% of the registered votes in the state, the Green Party, founded in 1984 in Maine, can often deliver 5-10% of the general election vote for its candidates. It thus plays an important role in such close electoral contests as the 2nd CD race of 1992 (helping Congresswoman Olympia Snowe hold off the challenge of Pat McGowan) and the gubernatorial contest of 1994 (siphoning off Democratic votes in Portland to undercut the efforts of Joe Brennan). This latter showing of 6.5% was enough to qualify the Green Party as an official party, the first recognized Green party east of the Mississippi.

This rough parity in voter turnout between Republican and Democrats has been buttressed over time by a change in the professional aspects of campaigns.

Although Democrats began the use of TV in 1954, and it took the Republicans nearly 20 years to catch up to its potential, in the 21st century, both political parties and their Independent and Green counterparts have had access to superior local and national TV talent for use in Maine campaigns.

Added to this the rise of professional polling (again with both local and national players of note) meant that all successful – and many unsuccessful – candidates had access to assistance beyond the imagination of their counterparts from the 1940's and 1950's.

All this added talent required considerable expenditures, of course, and even when adjusted for inflation, overall costs of successful campaigning in Maine skyrocketed. Whereas someone could run for Congress in the 1960's or 1970's and spend only tens of thousands of dollars, by century's end, successful candidates were obliged to raise \$300,000-400,000 for contested races. Major party candidates routinely spent \$2-3 million for Senate and gubernatorial races while in 2002, the Green Party, electing to go with public financing, was able to spend over \$900,000 of taxpayer money.

The largest and most expensive – by far - element in the mix was the cost of TV time. Whereas the Muskie campaign of 1954 could buy a half hour of television time, and get a very good reach for its message, for several hundred dollars, the same penetration in 2002 cost \$125,000 for a thousand statewide gross rating points!

The 30-second TV commercial has become the staple of the political activity for Congress, governor and the US Senate and its quality and quantity often accounts for success or failure in the current Maine political environment. This is a far cry from the 1960's when candidates expected - and were expected - to spend the bulk of their campaign time actually out meeting voters.

Now such an activity goes by the name “retail politics,” and while still important in the rural areas of Maine, has been diminished by the overwhelming demands of the TV effort, often referred to as the “air war.” Despite the passage of the so-called “Clean Elections Act of 1996 (which provides for candidate choice

of public financing for gubernatorial races), most candidates continue to spend inordinate amounts of time and effort raising money, both within the state and outside it.

This rise in cost and professionalism has not dimmed the general enthusiasm for politics however. The 2002 election cycle saw 9 Democrats and 4 Republicans vying for the open 2nd CD when John Baldacci ran for governor and every two years, dozens of Maine citizens offer themselves up for public scrutiny and possible service.

B. An Enduring Archetype

In the midst of all these changes in the rhythms and demands of political campaigning in the Pine Tree State, it is interesting to note the persistence of some sturdy political archetypes very much in the previous Maine tradition.

Thus far, as we open the 21st century, none stands as discernable as that of the election of strong willed, independent senators (and for the present situation, we could add Republican and female).

In 1960, Senator Margaret Chase Smith was at the height of her political power nationally, even running for president of the United States that year, the first woman to do so. Elected to Congress in 1940 following the death of her husband, Congressman Clyde Smith, Margaret quickly established herself as a feisty, hard working, shrewd campaigner – she won four elections within six months of each other during a six month period in 1940.

In 1948, she decided to run for the US Senate, challenging a very popular sitting Republican governor, Horace Hildreth, and a dedicated World War I hero and former governor, Sumner Sewall

as well as a highly regarded minister, Albion Beverage. Her upset victory in the Republican primary of 1948 soon thrust her onto the national stage and her follow up victory in the September general election, as well as two successful reelection campaigns, solidified her position in the Maine political firmament.

But much more importantly for the course of Maine politics generally, she established herself in Washington as a strong, independent, national voice. In doing so, she was often at odds with her Republican president. In fact, for as much as six of the eight years Eisenhower was in the White House, she was out of favor with her own president. (2)

Her independence, national stature and legislative power (she was once the ranking Republican on the armed services and appropriation committees), established a model which was subsequently followed by Ed Muskie, Bill Cohen and George Mitchell and which today is personified by Maine's two Republican senators, Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins.

For his part, Ed Muskie was often at odds with President Lyndon Johnson and Bill Cohen even voted to impeach his Republican counterpart, Richard Nixon. Today, both Snowe and Collins are quite often in the press for opposing one or another of George W. Bush's policies. Both Maine senators continue to acknowledge their debt to Senator Smith, and it is not difficult to see her archetypal impact and hear echoes of her style and personality in their political activities. Maine likes feisty, independent senators!

It is thus now an enduring part of our Maine political heritage that although we expect our Congressmen and woman to be somewhat more faithful to the party and their presidents, we expect, even demand, that our senators fit the model established so long ago of being independent, national in outlook and, truth be

told, willing to both tell truth to power and be a little self-righteous in the bargain. For students and practitioners alike, the persistence of such an archetype is a fascinating insight into Maine politics.

Many other people in many other states frankly prefer other models for their senators. In lieu of national stature, they often expect elaborate political patronage and bringing home the political bacon - think of Senator Byrd in West Virginia who managed to bring a major Coast Guard facility to that landlocked state or Senator Eastland and Lott who routinely take ships that should be built in Bath and cart their contracts off to Mississippi. But in Maine, the political culture expects, even demands, both national outlook and performance.

In the Pine Tree State, we expect our senators to play a national role and even to sacrifice Maine's parochial interests (at least on occasion) for the greater good of the nation. Maine's two current senators are well within that tradition and both also exhibit that competitive streak that made Ed Muskie want to top Margaret Chase Smith, Bill Cohen want to top Ed Muskie, and George Mitchell want to top Bill Cohen. Maine citizens praise cooperation among the Maine delegation but they also appreciate competitive zeal on the national stage.

They simply expect their senators to play a national as opposed to a purely representational role. They expect their senators to fit the modern model of Margaret Chase Smith. This is simply the persistence of a previously featured, ultimately for Maine people, most satisfying archetype.

C. The Rise of the Franco American Voter

Another important trend in Maine politics, one which has intensified during the period under review, is the rise of Independent candidates and their considerable success. In 1960,

independents never came close to being elected to major office, although Neil Bishop, rural Republican populist running as an Independent Republican in the general election helped Ed Muskie defeat the incumbent Republican governor Cross in 1954.

James Longley Sr. was the first independent governor in the United States following his victory in the hotly contested three-way race of 1974 against Republican Jim Erwin and Democrat George Mitchell.

While political insiders were not surprised by the defeat of Jim Erwin (he had already run for governor twice and lost both time), they were stunned by Longley's upset of George Mitchell. Mitchell, the protégé of Senator Ed Muskie and a veteran of many political battles on behalf of the senator saw his late and large lead was eclipsed by a surprising surge the last weekend of the campaign, a surge which put Longely over the top.

Both the accomplishments and antics of Longley in office lie beyond the scope of this chapter but in terms of politics in Maine, he served as a role model for many citizens who wished to imitate his efforts. More than a dozen independent and third party candidates ran for governor from the period 1974 until 2004. Several, John Menario and Sherry Huber, received 15% of the vote, their totals in 1986 being the high water marks for twenty years following Longley's record-breaking performance.

But none of those independent candidates succeeded in winning until Angus King did so in 1994, fully twenty years later. Anyone who knew both Longley and King, with their differing temperaments, public philosophies and personalities will, no doubt, be quite surprised to learn of the identical nature of the political coalitions which elected them. Both benefited from relatively poor campaigns run by their opponents, both had a strong inner faith in

the righteousness of their quests and both, at base, shared a strong sense of their own superiority.

Both were elected by exactly the same voting coalition, an unusual combination of urban, Franco American Democrats and small town, Yankee Republicans. Of the dozens of independents who ran for governor in the intervening years, only these two were able to put together the necessary demographic combinations to emerge victorious. The explanation requires some background. Much has changed in this regard since 1960.

Up until 1972, Maine had straight ticket party voting which meant that a voter could check off a single, large box at the top of the ballot and vote for all the candidates of the party she or he chose. This was called the “Big Box” system and it played a very important role in making it easy for party faithful, Republican and Democrats, to vote a straight ticket. It is very difficult to imagine circumstances prior to 1972 under which both parties would have seen the types of significant defections necessary to propel an independent into office.

As for the Big Box, both parties generally assumed that it helped their cause, but following the very close race for governor in 1970 (when Democrat Ken Curtis narrowly defeated Republican Jim Erwin), there was a great deal of scrutiny concerning the voting patterns and the definitive assessment was done by none other than George Mitchell on behalf of the Democratic party.

In a widely read piece in the Maine Sunday Telegram, Mitchell proved conclusively that there was a rural/urban split in Maine voting patterns, with urban dwellers much more likely to vote Democrat and the rural voters much more likely to go for Republican candidates. This prosaic notion fit the assumptions both parties had long been making.

What raised eyebrows – and political tempers – was Mitchell’s additional finding that Democratic voters were much more likely to use the “Big Box” than their Republican counterparts and that most importantly, Franco-Americans, a bedrock portion of the Democratic coalition, were most likely to use that device.

Taking a position which he took to be pro-democratic, rather than pro-Democratic, Mitchell called for the elimination of the Big Box. Reaction was swift, ironic and more than a little important for the future of Maine politics. Democrats resisted all attempts to eliminate the Big Box but Republican activists seized on Mitchell’s article as proof the system needed reform.

Various legal and political machinations followed, but it was left to Robert “Bob” Monks, a Massachusetts transplant who wanted to run for the US Senate, to organize and fund a referendum to eliminate the Big Box. That referendum was successful in June of 1972 and set the stage for a Republican resurgence led by Bill Cohen. Cohen was to win his Congressional race that fall in large part because of his ability to attract Franco American voters, especially from Lewiston, getting them to split their ticket and vote for Democrat Bill Hathaway over Senator Margaret Chase Smith but then vote for him over Democrat Elmer Violette. Cohen was thus able to keep Violette’s margin down enough in Androscoggin County and win the seat, the only Republican to win major office that year. From 1972 onward then, the Franco Americans (18% of the electorate) who had traditionally been Democratic voters and were the most stalwart of that party were now “in play.”

Before 1972, it had been something of a self-fulfilling prophecy as Republican candidates didn’t bother to campaign in the Franco American cities such as Biddeford or Lewiston, Sanford

or Waterville. Now, however, it was both imperative and rewarding for Republicans and Independents to campaign there.

This then was the background for Longley's historic victory as he put together the first coalition of urban Francos and small town Republicans. Although Longely did not capture a majority of Franco American voters statewide, he did well enough in his home locale of Lewiston and Auburn to narrowly defeat George Mitchell, despite (or rather because of) Mitchell's major get out the vote effort in Lewiston in November, 1974.

Following Longely's success that year, over a dozen Independent or non-traditional party candidates sought the governorship in the coming decades but none came close to winning, in part because none recognized the only potentially winning coalition. Also, even having the model was not enough because putting that particular coalition together required both major parities – not just one – to either field poor candidates or good candidates who lacked the resources or strategy to run good campaigns.

It was only 20 years later that Angus King, running not as the Democrat he had been for so many years, but as an Independent, was able again to put together this seemingly strange alliance. It was, of course, not a very strange alliance at all if one takes into account the world view of many Franco American voters in Maine. Unlike Irish American voters, who in large numbers tend to champion bigger governmental programs and more social engineering, Franco American voters are more likely to agree with so called Republican issues such as small business and less government regulation over them.

King's successful campaign targeted both these urban small Democratic business operatives but also of course, the small town Republican voters who had long accepted the notions of local

businesses and their opposition to greater and greater federal intrusion into their operations. Although King's overall margin was smaller than Longley's had been, he actually captured a plurality of Franco American voters statewide, defeating both Joe Brennan and Susan Collins in 1994.

Thus the Franco American community in Maine has gone from being a "safe" and often unrewarded piece of the Democratic coalition, to a much more powerful and influential demographic entity, both in terms of candidate campaigns and in ballot measures as well. The election of the first avowed Franco American in modern times to major office took place in 2002 when Mike Michaud from East Millinocket won the 2nd CD over Kevin Raye. Interestingly enough, Margaret Chase Smith was of French Canadian background but did not know it or acknowledge it until late in her life after her defeat in 1972.

D. The Increasing Importance of Ballot Measures

Another major change in the political landscape of Maine during the past forty years has been the rise of the ballot measure or referendum process. While there had been numerous referenda before in Maine, especially in the 1960's and 1970's and a few (such as the referendum on the income tax in 1971) were of considerable importance these were mostly rather low key, in-state contests.

All that changed with the 1980 nuclear referendum. The Maine Yankee shutdown referendum altered the Maine political landscape with force and vigor and the politics of the Pine Tree state has never been the same. From 1960-1980, there were only a half-dozen citizen-generated referenda, while from 1980 to 2000 there were nearly 30. Not only did the ballot measures come with greater frequency, they increasingly became issues either brought

from outside the state or financed (either or both sides) primarily by outside interests.

The Maine Yankee effort was the first Maine ballot measure to break the \$1 million spending barrier. The previous most expensive efforts had been the 1973 public authority referendum which cost less than \$250,000 and the 1976 Bottle Bill which cost less than \$500,000.

Later ballot measures, just like their candidate counterparts rose in cost and duration. For example, campaigns over the Forest Compact, proposed Clear Cutting Ban cost well over \$1 million. The Gay Rights struggle of 1995, cost \$1.3 million while the 1999 fight over partial birth abortion struggle cost \$2.4 million while that over Physician Assisted Suicide totaled over \$4. It likely that the battle of casinos in 2003 will top out at over \$6 million when all the votes are tallied.

It should be noted, however, that as in candidate campaigns, having the largest budget is no guarantor of success. For example, in the Bottle Bill referendum of 1976, the effort to widen the Maine Turnpike in 1991, the telephone local measured service campaign, the proposed bans on clear cutting (1997 and 1998), the Gay Rights battle of 1998 and the Assisted Suicide contest of 2002, the side with considerably larger financial resources lost.

Ballot measure campaigns also extended the time frame. Whereas those in the 1960's had been of two or three months duration, by the end of the century they often ran 12 to 18 months. The Maine Municipal Association, for example, seeing a 15% property tax cut by having the state fulfill to fulfill its previously stated obligation (dating to 1984) to pay 55% of the cost of K-12 education in Maine, began their 2003 campaign early in 2002 for the election of 2003.

But ballot measure campaigns did more than simply extend the duration of the political season in Maine. They enabled citizens to directly influence public policy in a way they had never done before. During the period under review, more citizens and more organizations began to view the referendum process as both a legitimate tool and an operational necessity.

If stymied in the Legislature, they could go outside that process and relatively easily (only 40-50,000 signatures were required to put a measure on the ballot during the latter portion of the 20th century) and quickly (most gathered all the necessary signatures on a single general election day).

The 2003 referenda on casino gambling and property tax reform reflect citizen initiative to go around the Legislature when that body refused to deal with these issues in a fashion acceptable to their supporters. This democratization of the political process had been largely ignored or at least under reported, or even missed entirely by many observers of the Maine political scene.

But Maine has changed from a state where election day saw primarily candidate and bond issues on the ballot to one where election day usually sees one or more referenda on the ballot and, equally importantly, one's friends, neighbors and strangers seated at small card tables asking for signatures for the next round of ballot measures! Indeed, I believe that as many people sign petitions because of the friendly faces offering them pens and coffee as for the causes themselves. Of course, political consultants and their allies and kin sign the petitions out of a desire for their full employment possibilities!

E. A Threat to the Ballot Measure Process.

But there is currently a major threat to the democratization of the ballot measure process. The last several election cycles have

witnessed a most pernicious change in this dimension of the political climate of Maine. There has been a discernable rise in censorship within the ballot measure process (fortunately, it is unlawful in candidate campaigns).

Television is the principle driver of ballot measure outcomes. Therefore, free and unfettered access to TV is the sine qua non for competing ideas in referenda. Now certainly, TV stations must have some standards (although it would be nice if they could agree on them from one station to another) of what is acceptable and what is not when it comes to 30 second commercials. And few would suggest that the body politic would be well served if outright lies were allowed to permeate the airwaves.

But what has evolved is a far cry from the above. Today, the station managers in Maine TV stations take it upon themselves to pass judgment on virtually every ballot measure commercial which comes their way, subjecting them to a scrutiny and a personal standard seldom, if ever, applied to their commercial advertisers.

For anyone not directly on the inside of political campaigns, what follows may be hard to imagine. Occasionally, there are well publicized (in the print media) cases of stations taking one commercial off the air but here, the self-serving comments of the station managers are taken at face value because the campaigns fear they will be discriminated even more when they submit their next commercial. But most of the current censorship goes on out of sight of the public and, with few exceptions, has gone unnoticed. (4)

I believe that the present censorship and vetting process conducted by station managers is arbitrary, capricious and pernicious to the course of democratic politics. Station managers can – and do decide – which commercials are acceptable and which are not. All political sides have to marshal legal talent to

present their cases. All political sides have to provide masses and masses of “supporting” documents for any and all claims. All political sides know that the station managers are playing this game so they in turn mount challenges to any and all of the opponents’ commercials.

The resulting process is messy, arbitrary and unfair to the citizens because it means they get only those images, thoughts and facts (or factoids!) which the station managers deems acceptable or appropriate. Moreover, there is no recourse if ones commercial is pulled. Most readers may be shocked to find out that the fairness doctrine no longer applies in referendum situations (as it did prior to the Reagan presidency) so the station managers end up being the only arbiters of the process.

Some reject commercials because they contain the word “will” instead of “could,” or “might.” Some station managers prefer commercials with no verbs! Some reject commercials because they don’t like the subject. Some reject commercials because they don’t like the treatment of that subject. Some reject commercials because their stations have editorialized against the side putting up the spot. Some reject commercials on whims.

In the last decade then, ballot measure campaigns have had to develop pressure strategies – because if one campaign does it, the other must produce a countervailing influence. So batteries of lawyers are engaged, campaigns send reams and ream of documents but the station manager continues to have the last word and there is no appeal process possible. As a result, campaigns end up having to put pressure on stations in other ways, by having their supporters pull commercial sponsorships. In this regard, it is ironic that station managers are most likely to fear the withdrawal of car advertising.

All of this is quite a change from 1960! And not a change for the better, for it denies the voting public a chance to hear all sides unfettered and uncensored. Capricious censorship, indeed unfair or arbitrary censorship of any kind, has no place in a free society. The free exchange and clash of ideas will always lie at the heart of the democratic process and we must all work to restore balance and integrity and predictability to the process.

E. The Centrality of Psychographics in Maine Elections.

I believe the biggest change in Maine's political landscape, and one which has flowed directly from the referendum process, is the tremendous rise in importance of psychographics as opposed to demographics. This chapter may well stand alone in this regard given the overwhelming attention being paid to demographics and demographic determinism in so many of the other pieces in this volume.

Now the term "psychographic" needs some explanation in this context. Originally used in advertising and marketing to denote life style and consumer preferences, we have increasingly found it to be a useful tool in understanding Maine politics.

As used in this chapter and my previous polling work, "psychographic" refers primarily to psychic imagery around which voters make decisions. It is a shorthand way of describing the "inner landscape" of the voters of Maine. The use of psychographics turns out to be a highly useful concept in determining why voters vote a certain way on certain issues at certain times and then vote another way at other times.

Part of this has to do with the basic and existing mind set of the voters, that is what imagery they bring to a particular referendum. And part of it has to do with the ability of various campaigns to reinforce, change or obliterate the existing imagery,

by substituting new images and new connotations to older cognitive maps.

For example, in the 1991 referendum to stop the widening of the Maine Turnpike, opponents of the turnpike were highly successful in the run up to the election to provide powerful word pictures of wetlands. These “sacred wetlands” as they became known, and the wonderful ecosystems they supposedly contained were actually the drainage ditches to the side of the proposed wider highway. Even though the “wetlands deficit” (which was to be offset with other created wetlands elsewhere), the power and majesty of the “sacred wetlands” concept overrode more pedestrian notions of what was at stake with many people. The up scale voters in the Portland suburbs, for example, voted against the widening in large part because of the environmental concerns.

In 1996, however, when the issue was reintroduced, the proponents of the widening superimposed another, more powerful image onto the sacred wetlands. This was the notion of traffic jams and the danger to one and all. Powerful and evocative commercials showing emergency workers trapped in traffic on the Maine Turnpike convinced voters that safety and emergency access were more important than worrying about the drainage ditches. The fact that so many of the upscale voters who had voted against the widening in 1991 had been stuck in traffic on their way to Boston in the intervening years didn't hurt either.

Or take the example of the Maine woods.

Here I have traced two archetypes over the past twenty years. The first is that of “The Wild Wild East” of wilderness and forests where hunting and fishing is in a grand tradition and the scenery is magnificent and trees are tall and cut, if at all, individually. The second is that of “The Industrial Forest” best captured by a Wilderness Society film featuring a gigantic, large-house sized

machine coming through the woods, not only cutting every tree but literally picking them up by the trunks and shaking out the dirt from the roots.

The various debates over clear cutting have taken place within the context of these two images. Psychographically, people tend to vote based on the archetype they start with and retain or which can be placed or super imposed on in their initial image. The Forest Compact went down to defeat primarily because of the powerful imagery used at the end by opponents of the Compact who featured industrial grade spraying threatening life and limb, children and grandchildren.

Conversely, in the forestry referendum of 2002, the carefully and lovingly tended plots of the small woodlot owners evoked a more positive and nostalgic look at the Great Maine Woods while the threat of sprawl (so prominently featured in other chapters in this book) were juxtaposed with a ban on clear cutting which might actually lead to more cutting (since a landowner had to cut 20% of his or her trees every year or lose the right to cut them).

The Industrial Forest psychographic won the first two forestry referenda, while the Wild Wild East one took the third as the Sportsman's Alliance and the Audubon Society (with the paper industry providing the financing for providing the new imagery) squared off against the Ecology Network and the Natural Resources Council of Maine.

Inside voters' heads then, the negative imagery of clear cutting first drove out proposed modest changes in forest practices while later, images of small wood lots acting as a persuasive buffer against sprawl. Wherever else that sprawl was found, it was found in voters' minds as much in the great north woods as in the suburbs of Portland. The competing life style and choices inherent in one's

inner world view are thus also at the heart of the current debate of the proposed Indian casino in Sanford.

Do you have an image of Maine which precludes such a facility? Do you feel that the LL Bean outdoor, Wild, Wild East image is at odds with a possible gambling facility of that size, magnitude and advertising scope? Or do you have an inner landscape holistic enough to include a Maine of casinos and a Maine of LL Bean? Either image will help you make up your mind on the referendum this fall.

These images and the connotations they provided, helped determine the outcome of these public policy decisions made at the ballot box as much if not more than party registration, economic status or other demographic considerations.

And as the 21st century proceeds and there are more ballot measures and more public policy decisions decided each November, the role of psychographics can only increase. Individuals, groups, parties and corporations will only ignore these important aspects at their peril. These interior landscapes, these cognitive maps give texture and meaning to the state's political dimensions.

Conclusion: Maine Politics, the Way Politics Should Be.

We in Maine have many things to be thankful for when we think about our political system – the quality of our candidates, the willingness of our citizens to change their minds during campaigns, the ease of entry into the political process, the careers in politics open to talent, not just as candidates but as political operatives, and the ease with which citizens can bring their causes to the political market place of ideas. (3)

Too often analysts of the Maine political scene decry its shortcomings to the exclusion of a well-deserved emphasis on its politics. It is not possible to look carefully at the last 40 years of Maine's political history without being struck with a number of considerable positives in the process.

Maine politics remains tremendously open to talent. People from all walks of life enter politics and get elected to major offices in the state. Congressman Michaud was a blue collar worker, Governor Baldacci worked in his family's restaurant. Susan Collins was a congressional staffer. She and Olympia Snow are self made political successes in the traditional of Margaret Chase Smith. On all levels, Maine people literally walk in off the street to get involve and play major roles in the campaigns which shape the state's destiny.

Maine politics also remains tremendously malleable. The past 40 years has seen many candidates and ballot measure campaigns succeed simply because of the quality of their campaigns qua campaigns. Some Maine people put together their time, effort and scarce resources in more appropriate and effective ways than others. There is little that is "preordained" in the Maine political process.

In additional, in Maine politics, political honesty and civility remain hallmarks. Despite the increasingly negative political tone at our national level and despite the unpleasant intrusions of national negative ads and styles, Maine candidates continue to exhibit honesty, integrity and civility in equal measures.

In general, it is hard to dislike most of the people who run for higher political office in Maine, even if we disagree with their stand on issues. They tend to treat each other the way we, and they, would prefer to be treated. Character assassination and personal vitriol remain very much the exception in Maine politics.

We have much to be thankful for in these early years of the 21st century and it remains for us to pass on this cherished, positive legacy to those who come after us.

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Footnotes

1. Christian P. Potholm, “This Splendid Game:” Maine Politics from 1940 to 2002 (Washington: Lexington Books, 2003). See also, L. Sandy Maisel and Elizabeth Ivry, “If You Don’t Like Our Politics, Wait a Minute: Party Politics in Maine at the Century’s End,” in Jerome M. Mileur (ed.), Parties and Politics in The New England States (Amherst: Polity Publications, 1997), pp.15-35 as well as the very important Kenneth T. Palmer, G. Thomas Taylor and Marcus A. Librizzi, Maine Politics and Government (Lincoln:

University of Nebraska Press, 1992). Richard Condon and William Barry also cover this general topic in their “The Tides of Change, 1967-1988,” in William W. Judd, Edwin A. Churchill and Joel W. Eastman (eds.), Maine: The Pine Tree State from Prehistory to the Present (Orono: University of Maine Press, 1995), pp 554 –571.

(2) Over the last decade, there has been something of a boom in scholarly writing about the nation’s first women senator elected in her own right. See especially Janann Sherman, No Place for a Woman: A Life of Margaret Chase Smith (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2000), Patricia Ward Wallace, Politics of Conscience: A Biography of Margaret Chase Smith (Westport: Praeger, 1995) and Patricia L. Schmidt, Margaret Chase Smith: Beyond Convention (Orono: University of Maine Press, 1996) For reasons not clear to this author, there has not been a comparable level of interest in Ed Muskie. In fact, not only has there been no major work since the 1970’s when Muskie was in the national spotlight and the subject of David Nevin, Muskie of Maine (New York: Random House, 1972) and Theo Lippman and Donald Hansen, Muskie (New York: W.W. Norton, 1974). Moreover, Chris Beam at the Muskie Archives indicates that there is no biography under way using those documents. This seems a pity.

(3) A special thanks to those scholars and activists who have commented on drafts of this chapter. These include Dick Morgan, Jean Yarborough, Joel Moser, Maria Fuentes, Ken Palmer, Erik Dodds Potholm, Sandra Quinlan Potholm and Dick Barringer. Friends all and most helpful critics.

(4) See, for example, Jim Brunelle, “TV Stations Managers Shouldn’t Be Censoring Political Speech,” Portland Press Herald, October 3, 2003, p. 17A. I have also explored this outrage in “A

Clear and Present Danger,” in The Delights of Democracy (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2002), pp. 49-54.